

### Hours and Dues

The Osceola Mills Community Historical Foundation’s museum is located in the historic Brisbin House on Lingle Street in Osceola Mills PA. Regular museum hours are **Sundays from 2:00 until 4:00. The OMCHF meets in the Brisbin House on the first Wednesday of each month** (excluding December to February) **at 7:00 pm.** Dues are \$5.00 per year for an individual, \$15 for a family, \$25 for a group or business and \$100 for a lifetime membership.

### Museum Tours

Tours for individuals or groups, outside of regular hours, can be arranged by calling 814-339-7778 or 814-378-5748.

### President’s Report

The OMCHF has witnessed another productive and successful year! Last autumn we cleaned out some broken items and discarded them from our basement area. We are planning to rearrange the displays in the basement and move the Brisbin House model to the third floor for easier access and viewing.

The OMCHF continues to work with the Osceola Mills Library which is also located in the Brisbin House. Needed repairs, heating and cooling issues as well as general upkeep are closely monitored and attended to when necessary. Expenditures are closely monitored as well.

Our **annual dinner** in December was a fine success! It was again held at the Elks Country Club in Philipsburg and featured Susie O’Brien, of Tyrone, as the guest speaker. Her topic was the 1893 wreck of the Walter L. Main circus train at the bottom of Sandy Ridge mountain in Vail. Susie’s home is built on the site of the catastrophe—on land that has been in her family for generations. She is a superb writer and lecturer on the sad but historic event that saw many circus animals and a few employees killed. Her slide show and collection of artifacts

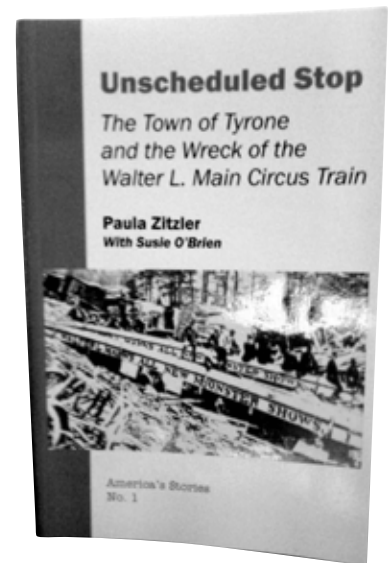
**Remember, all are welcome to visit our museum and attend our monthly meetings! The OMCHF needs and wants you! Come to our museum and experience the rich local history of the Osceola Mills area! The displayed artifacts, books, photos, etc. have all been donated by those with a warm attachment to Osceola Mills. More than anything, community pride is on display!**

was spellbinding and our thanks go out to her on a program well done. Susie is also the coauthor of *Unscheduled Stop: The Town of Tyrone and the Wreck of the Walter L. Main Circus Train*, which is an excellent account of the wreck.

#### Osceola Mills Spirit

**Day 2015** was another success and the OMCHF again featured its soup sale. Every drop was sold as were many tee shirts, sweat shirts and ball caps. This year’s **2016 Osceola Mills Spirit Day will be held on Saturday, September 10, from 9:30 until 3:00.** All are welcome!

The OMCHF mourns the recent passing of Elsie Penny who was a founding member and active worker for our foundation. May she rest in peace.



# Recent Events

**July 4<sup>th</sup> Week In Osceola Mills:** The annual car show was held on Sunday, June 30. The OMCHF received nearly one hundred visitors to its museum and sold Osceola Mills and Cowtail logo shirts. The parade theme highlighted the 140th anniversary of the construction of the historic Brisbin House.

Our large scale model of the Brisbin House was placed on the back of David Caslow's truck and make a fine parade float that was well received by the community. Thank you David and Floyd Hauth for dismantling the house model and hoisting it on to the truck!



We were honored to have as visitors: David and Clark Hamerly, the great great grandsons of JC Hamerly. Mr. Hamerly oversaw the construction of the Brisbin House in 1876. Their visit was a nice added touch to honoring our Osceola Mills heritage.

The OMCHF also sponsored the annual **Rabies Clinic** in May and helped to sponsor the **Osceola Mills Flower Show** in July. **Christmas Caroling** is again planned for December.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND/OR ANNUAL DUES RENEWAL

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership (circle one): Individual \$5.00      Family \$10.00      Group \$25.00      Lifetime \$100.00

**Please enclose a check payable to OMCHF and mail to: OMCHF  
601 Lingle St  
PO Box 212  
Osceola Mills, PA 16666**

## Clothing for Sale

The OMCHF continues to sell Osceola Mills and Cowtail logo tee shirts, sweat shirts and ball caps! **These items make great gifts and are a good way to show your Osceola Mills pride!** Please contact Shirley Hollenbach at 814-339-7942 for information regarding designs and shipping.

Tee Shirts . . . . . \$12.00      Sweatshirts . . . \$20.00  
Hoodies . . . . . \$30.00      Ball Caps . . . . . \$12.00

## Books and DVDs for Sale

*Osceola Mills From The Beginning*  
by Jasper Fritz . . . . . \$10.00  
*Hills of Penn* by Jim McNeish . . . . . \$6.00  
*Chief Osceola, Patriot and Warrior* . . . . . \$2.50  
*Days and Events That I Remember*  
by Bud Hollis . . . . . \$6.00  
*Osceola Mills Photo Slide Show DVD*  
by David Caslow. . . . . \$12.00  
*Osceola Mills From the Beginning DVD Volume 2*  
by Jerry Fritz . . . . . \$12.00

Books and DVDs can be ordered from the OMCHF. See address at bottom of page 2.

## Fire of May, 1875

Many local and national newspapers gave coverage to the terrible Osceola Mills fire of May, 1875. Disastrous fires in towns, made mostly of wood, were all too common in the 19th century—especially during a windy time of the year. It is hard to imagine the lives of Osceola Mills residents—most of whom were rather poor with little possessions—having to pick up the pieces of their lives after losing just about everything they had. There were some residents and businesses covered by home owner’s insurance, but many probably were not. Safety net programs did not exist to help the fire’s victims but it is worthy to note that people from many towns and areas generously donated to relief committees that were quickly set up to help those ravaged by the fire.

The *New York Times* reported well on the fire, but the best coverage that I have found came from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Some of its articles are included in this year’s annual bulletin.

This year, the Brisbin House marks its 140<sup>th</sup> year of construction. Rebuilding began immediately after the fire and George Brisbin’s fine edifice was completed in 1876. Happy Birthday Brisbin House!!!

~ DPW



# THE COAL FIELDS

## DESTRUCTIVE FIRES RAGING

*Clearfield and Schuylkill Struck*

## OSCEOLA AND HOUTZDALE WIPED OUT

*Moshannon Company Suffers Heavily*

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WITHOUT HOMES

*Tyrone & Clearfield Road Burning*

## MAHANÓY CITY IN DANGER

Widespread Destruction

TYRONE, May 20.—[Special Despatch to The Philadelphia Inquirer.]—Information has been received here to-day that the town of Osceola, about nineteen miles distant, has been reduced to ashes. The fire originated in a patch of woods in the suburbs, and it is supposed that the miners are complicated in the affair.

### Osceola in Ashes.

A large quantity of lumber adjoining the railroad track, belonging to the Moshannon Mills, was destroyed, and the flames afterwards spread to the dwelling houses in the town.

The excitement at Osceola is intense. As information was received at the neighboring villages, of the conflagration, large parties of men turned out to aid in fighting the fire. Notwithstanding their efforts, however, the town is almost a mass of ruins. The Moshannon Mills, together with ten million feet of lumber which were on the premises, have been destroyed.

About twenty-five dwelling houses, belonging the Moshannon Company, used for the accommodation of their laborers, have also been swept away by the flames. This company grew out of the Clearfield Coal and Lumber Company, and has a capital stock of \$500,000, most of which is held by Philadelphia capitalists.

The fire has broken out at Houtzdale, six miles from Osceola, at which place the Kittinging Coal Company have three collieries, which are in great peril of being consumed. The bridge crossing Moshannon creek, about three miles above the town of Osceola, has been burned. This will prevent all shipments from the Houtzdale regions.

The loss will be between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000. The principal part, however, will fall upon the Moshannon Company and the residents of the town. The Moshannon was one of the first to put its men to work last week, and the strikers are intensely bitter against that company. They have made threats and sworn vengeance, and the work to-day has much the appearance of executing the threat. It is not probable that forest fires would have swept over this whole district accidentally.

[BY ASSOCIATED PRESS.]

### Telegraph Office Destroyed.

TYRONE, May 20—2 P. M.—A large fire is raging at Osceola. The Western Union Telegraph Office has been destroyed, and communication is severed. Fire engines have been sent up from this place.

### Fire in the Clearfield Region.

TYRONE, Pa., May 20.—The fire is still raging at Osceola, and about twenty houses have been burned. The lumber piles on both sides of the track are now burning. It is rumored that the Powelton mines, two miles this side of Osceola, are on fire. The origin of the fire is supposed to be accidental. It started in the woods near Powelton.

### Fuller Details—Two Hundred Houses Burned.

TYRONE, Pa., May 20.—A fire broke out at eleven o'clock this morning at the Moshannon Lumber Company's mill, west of Osceola. Fifteen million feet of lumber were burned. The wind was so strong that fire brands two feet long were thrown to most all parts of the town of Osceola.

Fires are breaking out at every place. All public buildings, except the Catholic and Methodist Churches, were burned.

#### Homeless People.

About two hundred houses are also destroyed. Twelve hundred people are homeless. People were driven to the race course, where they were surrounded by fire from all sides, communication being cut off by the fire.

The Fire Department left here at two o'clock with their steamer and hose carriage, but could not reach Osceola on account of the railroad track being burned. The railroad between Osceola and Powelton on either side is one blaze of fire.

Members of the Tyrone Fire Company fought their way through, and rendered all the assistance possible. About two hundred houses are standing yet. Some half-dozen houses were burned between Osceola and Powelton. Powelton town was not destroyed.

#### Destruction of Houtzdale.

Sheriff McPherson left Houtzdale at four o'clock P. M. The reports at that hour were that fourteen houses were burned and the conflagration is raging terribly. There can be no escape for the town. Every communication being cut off by the fire through the woods.

#### Widespread Destruction.

At this writing, Hoops, Humes & Co.'s; Taylors', Moshannon Lumber Company's; Hells, Big, Bill & Elliot, and Caldwell lumber saw-mills are burned. Also Jesse Crawford's new foundry, also about thirty million feet of lumber destroyed. Total loss about two million dollars. The insurance is generally very light.

No lives were lost up to last report. The

people are in destitute circumstances, having lost property and everything else. The miners who were on strike are reported as working diligently to save Houtzdale. The woods between Tyrone and Phillipsburg are on fire.

#### Aid from Bellefonte—Danger to the Railroad.

BELLEFONTE, Pa., May 20.—An extra train left here this evening for Snow Shoe, with a large body of men from Valentine's works to aid in checking the fires in that region. Mine No. 4, at Snow Shoe, is burned. About seventy-five feet of trestle work of railroad has been destroyed. Water tanks and several buildings along the road are on fire, and great excitement prevails.

LATER.—About thirteen cars have been burned at Snow Shoe, and about eighty or one hundred tons coal, and all the houses about the mines destroyed. Creider's mill and a large lot of lumber destroyed. Also, a lot of timber belonging to the Bellefonte car works.

### MRS. ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

#### The Late President's Widow Inmate.

CHICAGO, May 19.—In the County Court, the trial of the question of the sanity of Mrs. Lincoln, widow of Abraham Lincoln, came up to-day.

The proceedings were based upon a petition filed by Robert L. Lincoln, setting forth that his mother, Mary L. Lincoln, has property and effects exceeding \$75,000; that she is *non compos mentis* and incapable of managing her estate, and praying the issuance of an order for a warrant and venire to test the question of her sanity.

The petition was accompanied by the certificate of the family physician (Dr. Isham), to the effect that he had examined Mrs. Lincoln and was of the opinion that she was insane and a fit subject for hospital treatment. Several witnesses testified to eccentricities in the conduct of Mrs. Lincoln, which commenced at the time of the assassination of President Lincoln, and which have become more marked as time progressed.

She imagines she hears voices in the wall, that strange beings beset her in the entries of her hotel, that she was the victim of poisoning plots. Her closets are full of unopened packages of goods which she had ordered to be sent to her room.

After short arguments the case was given to the jury, who brought in a verdict in accordance with the facts elicited. Mrs. Lincoln will be removed to the hospital at Batavia, Illinois. Her relatives and friends have delayed this step as long as was considered prudent, but finally agreed that nothing else would suffice.

At the announcement of the verdict Robert Lincoln took the hand of his mother affectionately, when she exclaimed with a reproachful tone, "Oh Robert, to think that my son would ever have done this." There were but few spectators in the court.

# FOREST FIRES.

Clearfield's Conflagration Over

COURSE OF THE FLAMES

A Survey of the Ruins

AID FOR THE SUFFERERS

Osceola's Calamity—Relief for the Needy—  
Still Battling with the Flames.

New York, May 23.—The Times special from Osceola, Pa., says:—

For miles all round this place the fire is still smouldering in the woods. There is a general feeling of uneasiness, but as the wind is light, hopes are entertained that no further serious losses will be experienced. In the immediate vicinity of Osceola the woods have been so thoroughly burned through as to prevent the possibility of further damage. The losses in lumber will be much greater than was at first supposed. During the winter millions of logs have been chopped in the woods and left ready to be hauled out during the spring and summer. A cursory examination made by parties who have penetrated the woods for miles in different directions has led to the discovery that the winter's chopping is either burned or so badly scorched as to render them utterly useless. Then there are literally millions of young trees still standing, out of which the fire has taken the sap. These, unless cut next year, will be valueless. Many thousands of piles of bark have also been consumed in the flames.

## Meeting of the Relief Committee.

The Relief Committee met at the house of Mr. Chester Munson, in Philipsburg, and drew up a circular containing an appeal to the public for aid to build up the town of Osceola. Many prominent men from the neighboring towns were present at the meeting. Provisions and clothes are still coming in from Clearfield, Tyrone, Bellefonte, and other places. Aid is sadly needed. Provisions are coming in, but there are many mouths to feed, and unless the supply is kept up many must go hungry.

## Whisky in the Woods.

Last night it was discovered that a barrel of whisky had been brought to a place in the woods near the town, and that a number of men had got drunk. The Catholic priest went to the place to disperse the men. He was, however, repulsed roughly. Going back to the town, or to the site where the town stood, he secured the aid of a party of citizens, who routed the seller and spilled the whisky.

Most of the men who got drunk came here from other districts, and many of them are desperate characters. To-day a force of special police was organized and placed under the command of Captain Clarke. Already two shanties are erected, but in most places the ruins are still too hot to commence building. The logs forming the corduroy roads leading to the town are still burning and sending up great clouds of smoke through the earth from clefts and rents in the covering of clay.

On Monday the Relief Committee will put up a frame building for the reception of whatever clothing or provisions may be sent here. Mr. S. S. Blair, superintendent of the Clearfield and Tyrone branch of the Pennsylvania railroad, has made arrangements for the transfer, free of cost, of such of the poorer people as have friends willing to receive them in other places.

## Insurance Companies Estimating Their Losses.

A number of insurance men were busily engaged here to-day in making estimates of their losses, but the work, owing to the confusion and excitement that still exist, was slowly carried on. Many people, too, who fled from the town on the day of the fire, having recovered from their first fright, returned to look at the ruins of their houses and gather some mementoes of the, to them, memorable day. A temporary store was opened to-day by the Relief Committee in one of the houses which escaped the flames. From this place shoes and some other necessary articles were dealt out to the more needy.

## The Houtzdale Fires.

The fire in the vicinity of Houtzdale is believed to be under control. Last night it reached into a patch of forest that covers a high hill between the Franklin and Sterling coal mines. The proprietors of both the mines had in all nearly five hundred men fighting the flames. The party was divided, and each, unconscious of the other's presence, were using their efforts to turn the flames from the direction of their respective mines. Many of these men got badly burned in cutting down trees and brushwood. Toward morning the parties met. The Sterling men, when they discovered what the Franklin men had been doing, angrily charged the latter with attempting to turn the fire on the Sterling mine. Similar charges were made against the Sterling men by the Franklin, and were it not for the interference of some of the cooler heads a serious fight would have occurred. The fire is still burning in the forests near Houtzdale, but the flames are traveling in a direction away from the town. As yet no measures have been taken for the relief of those burned out in that town. The woods are still burning in the vicinity of Philipsburg, but the town is not considered in danger.

**FOREST FIRES.**

**IN THE COAL FIELDS**

**Still Raging in Clearfield**

**OSCEOLA AND HOUTZDALE**

**Great Destruction of Property**

**A WOMAN BURNED TO DEATH**

**The Losses and Insurances**

TYRONE, Pa., May 21.—The fire is still raging furiously through the woods in the neighborhood of Osceola Mills, Pa. About two hundred and fifty houses were consumed in Osceola and four hundred families rendered homeless.

**A Ride For Life.**

Great praise is due to Mr. D. D. Wood, train-master of Tyrone, who, through his heroic conduct and presence of mind, saved a great many lives. He got a lot of box cars, and, after loading them with men, women and children, sent them through the burning forest at an extremely fast speed to Phillipsburg.

Four such trips were made, and about one thousand people taken to a place of safety. Great excitement and consequent confusion prevailed among the people. Houtzdale, a town of about nine hundred inhabitants, six miles from Osceola, is reported as entirely burned. The fire is

**Spreading Rapidly**

Through the woods beyond Houtzdale, and, at the latest accounts, had reached Parsonville, a small town six miles distant from Houtzdale. The ties on the Pennsylvania Railroad track from Osceola to Houtzdale, are burned so that no coal can be shipped for some time.

**An Appeal for Aid.**

Provisions have been sent in response to a call from L. G. Lingle, Burgess of Osceola, from here, Bellefonte, Huntingdon, and other places, for the sufferers, and meetings have been held to raise funds for their relief.

**The Loss.**

The heaviest losers by the Osceola fire as follows:—Pennsylvania railroad, \$65,000; Liveright, Lingle & Co., \$30,000; T. C. Helms & Co., \$30,000; John K. White, \$25,000; Isaac Taylor, \$20,000; Walker Brothers, \$15,000; Dr. D. R. Good, \$15,000; G. M. Brisbin, \$14,000; L. Y. O. Lingle, \$10,000; James H. Lipton, \$11,000; L. A. Crist, \$5,000; John Elliott & Co., \$12,000; J. S. Henderson, \$16,000; Emmett Bayers, \$3,000; Presbyterian Church, \$3,000, and a host of smaller amounts ranging from \$500 upward.

The insurance on Osceola Mills reach probably \$250,000 outside of the Moshannon Land and Lumber Company's mill, of which the Lycoming Insurance Company have \$35,000; the Aetna, \$25,000; Home, New York, \$25,000; North British, \$10,000; London, Liverpool and Globe, \$8,000; Royal, \$15,000; Atlas, \$8,000, and Germania, \$12,000. The balance is divided between the American, Pennsylvania, Farmers', Allemania, Lancashire, Phoenix and German American Companies.

**One Life Lost.**

Later reports say that one woman by the name of Stoneberger was burned.

The fire at Houtzdale, four miles above, on the Moshannon and railroad, has escaped pretty well, only out 15 houses being burned, and to the credit of the miners, even the violent strikers, worked like bees to save the coal chutes and improvements connected therewith, none of which have been injured.

The railroad will be repaired so as to bring out coal by Monday. Reports received here to-night describe the fire around Osceola and Phillipsburg nearly out.

**[BY ASSOCIATED PRESS.]**

**Origin and Course of the Osceola Fire.**

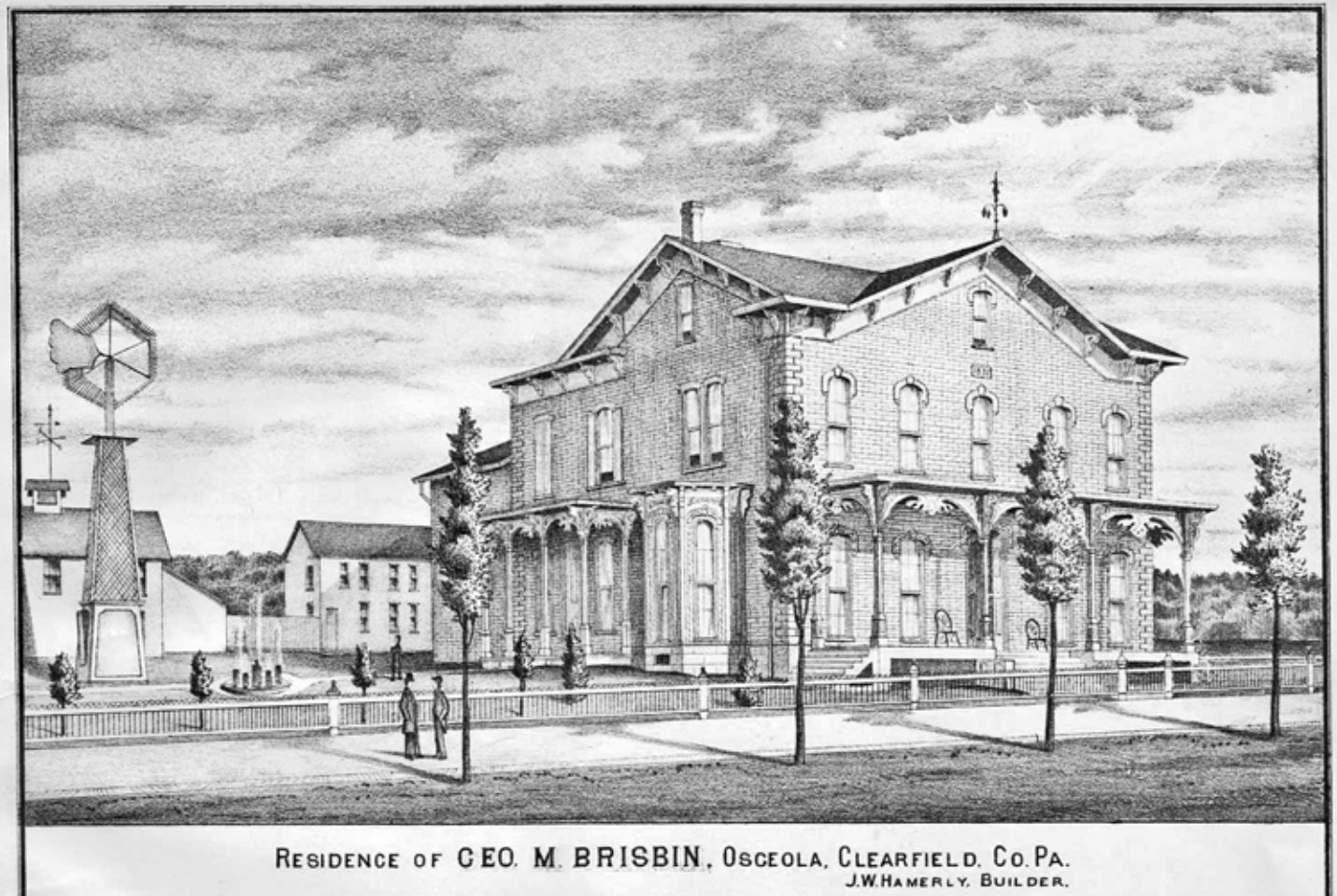
TYRONE, Pa., May 23.—The following has been received from the superintendent of the Moshannon Land and Lumber Company of Osceola Mills: I arrived here yesterday and found the destruction and devastation very much greater than it has been reported. Nine-tenths of the town is burned, leaving scarcely enough ashes to mark the spot where the houses stood. The fire broke out at or near Taylor's saw mill, on Coal run, two and three-fourth miles above Osceola, burned the mill, lumber and houses, swept down the run to Moshannon creek, taking in its course the saw mill, lumber and houses of T. C. Helms & Co.; thence down the Moshannon to the left mill of the Moshannon Land and Lumber Company, three-fourths of a mile above the town of Osceola, burning the mill and houses about 2,000,000 feet of lumber and houses, swept down both sides of the creek on the east side of the town of Osceola, taking first that part called Frenchville, sweeping over the centre of the town, taking in its course the Presbyterian church and public school and all the best dwellings in the place, with all the hotels and stores on the west side of the creek, at the same time first attacking the Philadelphia Colliery, owned by the Atlantic Coal Company, burning the chute and all the miners' houses, and twelve railroad cars belonging to the same company, and then the Tygo saw mill, owned by the Moshannon Land and L. Company, was between two fires.

The lumber first took fire and was fought vigorously, but to no avail. The Tygo Mills, as it is called, was about the last to take fire, and all was consumed around and about it, 15,000,000 feet of lumber and the great saw mill, so said, on this continent, not the largest, but the most complete of all its parts. Besides this the large planing mill belonging to Walker Bros, the saw mill of Samuel Milligan and the large steam sawmery of John Hite. In the midst of the conflagration

**Thieves and Robbers**

are plying their trade, appropriating articles of value. Money and clothing is needed and the supply of food will have to be kept up for a time. A committee of the very best men of the town is now in charge of the supplies coming forward, and they are being dispensed with great care and economy. A special police force is on duty.

Osceola Mills, PA 16666  
PO Box 212  
601 Lingle St  
OMCH



RESIDENCE OF GEO. M. BRISBIN, OSCEOLA, CLEARFIELD CO. PA.  
J.W. HAMERLY, BUILDER.