

# GRIGGS COUNTY PIONEER LOSES LIFE IN TERRIBLE MANNER TUESDAY NIGHT

**Charles Retzlaff, Well-to-do and Prominent Citizen of Tyrol Township, Wanders From Home Tuesday Evening and Is Found Dead Next Morning Near a Burned Straw Stack—Clothes Burned Off and Body Badly Scorched.**

The tragic death of Charles Retzlaff, of Tyrol township, whose home is two miles southeast of Jessie, which occurred during the hours of Tuesday night, has shocked the community beyond expression. Words are futile to describe the calamity which has befallen the surviving relatives, and the manner in which this most respected citizen succumbed.

It was about six o'clock Tuesday evening, when Mr. Retzlaff left his home to go to his old farm, just a short distance west across the road, now occupied by John Bercherl, where he intended to spend the evening. It was the intention of Mrs. Retzlaff to accompany him but she remained at home owing to a severe cold. Just how he failed to stop when he reached his destination, will perhaps never be definitely known, though it is the opinion of many that because of his near-sightedness, he was unable to discern the buildings in the darkness, when he approached them. This is a logical conclusion as his footprints in the snow revealed that he had passed nearby and continued on his way southwestward.

Mrs. Retzlaff awoke at two o'clock Wednesday morning, but thought nothing of her husband's absence then, as it was very usual for him to visit at the homes of his friends and remain over night. When one of the children from the Bercherl farm stopped at the Retzlaff place next morning on her way to school, Mrs. Retzlaff learned that he had not been there as he had planned. She immediately went to the Bercherl home and received from them information corroborating the statements of the little girl. Anxiety for his welfare became acute when this was learned, and a party started out in search of him. Tracks in the snow near the buildings were followed, leading southwestward, ending at a straw stack on the Emil Lowe farm, about two miles distant, where the body was discovered, dead. Mr. Lowe was the first to discover him, although the discovery was merely accidental as he was not aware of Mr. Retzlaff's absence or that searching parties were in quest of him. Mr. Lowe, too, had been spending the night away from home, and when he returned in the morning he noticed that one of his straw stacks had been set on fire. Curious to learn who might have done it and thinking that a visit to the stack might reveal a clue, prompted him to go there and investigate. In circling the stack he noticed a dark object in the snow and at first thought it struck him as being a calf, but on closer examination he found it to be the form of a man, but did not remain to scrutinize it carefully enough to learn the identity. When he was leaving the stack to go to Cooperstown to inform the authorities of what he had seen, one of the Bercherl boys approached, and told Mr. Lowe that he was in search of Mr. Retzlaff. The two then went where the body was lying and recognized it as being Mr. Retzlaff.

Attaching all details, it is believed that Mr. Retzlaff became lost and in his wanderings finally landed at the straw stack. Realizing his plight he decided to remain there until dawn to get his bearings. He then lay down to rest, lighting his pipe as he did so. It is thought he fell asleep, the pipe dropping from his mouth, igniting the straw from the falling sparks. He must have remained in this position until being awakened by the fire, which had by that time caught in his clothing. He left the stack and indications show that he had rolled in the snow in an endeavor to extinguish the flames. Becoming exhausted with the struggle, he naturally collapsed at the mercy of his burning clothes, and that torture, with the added exposure to the cold, ended in death.

The above theory is the only one given credence by Jessie people. No thought of suicide can be entertained nor was there any evidence of foul play. It is beyond The Times to conceive of a more tragic accident. Mr. Retzlaff was born in Germany, September 18, 1853. He is survived by his widow and five children, who are Emil A., of Jessie; Adolph H., of Sutton; Mrs. G. A. Rothert, of Clearfield township; Mrs. Henry Frederick, of Canada; and Miss Alvina, who lives at home. Funeral arrangements had not been made when this story was written. A detailed account of his life will be printed next week.

## or Cash

spent for food.  
lay, and so large  
mind it is appar-  
to carefully con-

method pursued—  
her ordered over  
attention being giv-  
being kept of  
much the orders

woman of the  
n she expected;  
been pursued.

## Superior

any account only.  
a selling; buying  
ay on credit.

each day, or at  
expenditures ac-

t to gain in pay-  
fair trial. We  
every purchase  
satisfied.