

AUGUST COURT OF QUARTER SESSION

A true bill was found by the Grand Jury vs. Rosa J. Carmichael, superintendent of the Orphans' Homestead, charged with aggravated assault and battery on the information of George W. Landon, one of the Orphans. The prosecutor not putting in appearance, the case, on motion of the Commonwealth, was continued to November term--the defendant entering into recognizance in the sum of \$600.

August court--1876

Star-Sentinel
August 31, 1876

Commonwealth vs. Rosa Carmichael. Charge, Aggravated assault on information of George W. Landon, one of the inmates of the Orphans' Homestead. Verdict--guilty on first count, not guilty on 2nd and 3rd. Sentenced to pay a fine of \$20 and cost of prosecution.

November Court Terms

Star-Sentinel
Nov. 16, 1876

THE GETTYSBURG SOLDIERS' ORPHANS HOMESTEAD

For several weeks there has been more or less excitement in our community in connection with the management of the Soldiers' Orphan Homestead located in this place, which was intensified by an article in the Phila. Times severley attacking the management. The article in the Times is generally accredited to Capt. J. M. Vanderslice, Adjutant General of the G. A. R. of Pennsylvania, who was in Gettysburg on Decoration Day, and who doubtless, during the visit here, became familiar with the rumors current on our streets for some time, and has made them the basis of his

article. As the controversy has reference to an Institution located in our midst, and hence of special interest to the mass of our readers, we transfer to our columns the article as it originally appeared in the Times. the reply of Mrs. Carmichael in the same paper--and also an editorial reference to the same subject matter in the Waynesboro (Franklin County) Record.

The matters disclosed in the Times article have been common rumors in this community for some time. Making due allowance for exaggerations usual under such circumstances, these charges are sufficiently circumstantial to demand from the Board of ~~Managers~~ immediate attention. If Mrs. Carmichael has been wronged by these charges, it is due to her that full investigation be made and her reputation be vindicated. On the other hand, if one-half of these alleged abuses exist and they are not at once remedied, the Board of Managers should be held responsible for criminal neglect of duty. Having assumed the trust and permitted their names to accredit the Homestead in its appeal to the public for liberal aid, it is their imperative duty to see to it that these funds are properly applied and that the orphan children gathered in the Home are properly cared for.

Without undertaking to discuss the correctness of these specific charges, a word or two of explanation is due to the citizens of Gettysburg. Whatever the character of the management of this Institution, let it be distinctly understood that the citizens of Gettysburg are in no wise responsible for it. Although located in our midst, our people have nothing to do with its administration. The Board of Managers reside in Philadelphia, and does the Bourns, the active and so far as we know the sole director of all its affairs. In the early history of the Institution provision was made for a visiting committee of ladies, resident in Gettysburg, who faithfully and cheerfully attended to their duties; but that arrangement fell through several years ago. In fact the management of the institution for the last year or two has not had the confidence of our people. For two years there has been no teaching--or if any--it has been nominal. The attention of the Board of Managers at Philadelphia has been called again and again to this fact, as did to the rumors of cruelty to and improper treatment of the children, but without avail. Corporal Shelly Post, G.A.R. interested in the proper care of the orphans of their fallen comrade, have interfered from time to time, only to be treated with contempt and charged with impertinent espionage. In one case, through their agency, the matron was indicted and convicted of assault and battery on one of the orphans. If there has been neglect to inquire into and reform the management of the Homestead, the fault must be charged to the Phila. Board, and not to the members of Corporal Shelly Post or the citizens of Gettysburg. The general

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conviction in this community is that the Homestead has outlived its usefulness and that the sooner it is closed the better.

In regard to two of the orphan girls (Bella Hunter and Lizzie Hutchinson) being made to wear boys' apparel, the charge is correct. These girls are about 16 or 17 years of age. Gen. Slayton, accompanied by several citizens, visited the Homestead to inquire into the matter, and was informed that the girls were being punished in this way for refusal to mend their dresses. Subsequently, on Monday week, these two girls were brought informally before his honor, Judge McClean, and given opportunity to select guardians and leave the Homestead. It turned out that Miss Hutchinson had a guardian at Catasauqua, while Miss Hunter chose General Stewart, of Philadelphia, as her guardian. Both were offered comfortable temporary homes in Gettysburg until their guardian could make other arrangements; but both declined and preferred to go back to the Homestead. We understand that Mrs. Carmichael has since taken them to Philadelphia and surrendered them to their guardians.

The boy Hutchinson, who turns up at Waynesboro as a complainant of bad treatment at the Homestead, is the "one armed" chap who is charged with maltreating other orphans.

Star-Sentinel
June 14, 1877
