



Lackawanna County News

The Tribune-Republican, Scranton, PA Saturday, April 8, 1911

Twenty-Nine Bodies Recovered From Blind Tunnel of China Vein In Pancoast Mine In Throop - Rescuers Still Removing Bodies

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SIXTY-TWO PERISH IN MINE FIRE

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Blaze In the Engine Room At Head of North Slope of Pancoast Colliery In Throop Fills Workings With Fumes and Blocks Workmen in Blind Tunnel of China Vein

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J. E. EVANS DIES IN TRYING TO REACH MEN

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Common Councilman John R. Perry Is Another Victim. Twenty-nine Bodies Recovered Up to 2 o'clock This Morning - Dr. J. A. Holmes Here From Washington

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At 3 o'clock this morning twenty-nine bodies were taken from the Price-Pancoast mine in Throop, where the lives of 350 mine workers were endangered yesterday morning by mine fire, resulting from the burning of a slope engine house in the China vein, some 700 feet below the surface.

During the day there were numerous reports as to the number of men entrapped in the mine. After midnight last night mine officials gave the number of missing as sixty-two.

At 2 o'clock this morning the work of removing the bodies is still going on.

The igniting of some matter, presumed to be greasy cotton waste in the engine house at the head of the "North" slope, brought on the worst mine disaster in the annals of subterranean horrors in the Lackawanna valley. Their only exit from their place of labor cut off by the smoke from the burning engine house, every man in the slope gangway lost his life.

Some of the officials at midnight declared that the men "lost their heads" and might have escaped through coolness in the face of danger. These officials declared that had the men followed the air course, they would have found an exit at the air shaft. On the contrary, men familiar with the mine stated during the afternoon that there was only one exit from the place where the men worked, and that this was through

the slope that they entered.

Mining experts who discussed the accident late last night, said they were surprised at the position in which the bodies had been found. They gave it as their opinion that all the men could

have escaped if they had run ahead of the smoke and fought their way through a return air course instead of running toward the fire. The return air course leads to an air shaft opening, 150 feet away from the hoisting shaft. No bodies were brought up through that opening and none of the rescuers entered the mine that way.

Dr. Holmes Here.

The disaster assumed proportions of national interest when Dr. J. A. Holmes, of Washington, DC, head of the government Department of Mines, and W. D. Roberts, superintendent of the department of instruction, reached this city at midnight. They were in Philadelphia attending a lecture. On learning of the disaster at the Pancoast they took the first train for this city and rushed to Throop in a taxicab. They expressed keen concern in the fate of Joseph Evans, foreman of the government's mine rescue crew stationed at Wilkes-Barre, and much interest in the operation of the apparatus worn by the rescue men.

Evans died, the first martyr from the ranks of the government's accident and mine rescue corps. At the head of a corps of twelve men, Evans arrived at the mine a little after 3 o'clock by

the government's mine department car, equipped with every facility for the work at hand. Donning his helmet, and strapping his oxygen tanks to his back, Evans was the first of his little band of five to board the carriage and to descend.

He met death in the eagerness to reach the entombed men at all hazards. His helmet, air-tight to prevent smoke or gas to reach his mouth, was covering his head, he rushed up to the spot where the fire raged and there worked with his own men and the company's hands to get a passage opened through the heat and smoke. His oxygen tanks and equipment, weighing forty pounds, was capable of keeping him up to two hours. The time he spent in working at the engine

house, at the head of the slope, may have drawn on the capacity of his equipment for when the "helmet" men finally did get beyond the fire, his overexertion told. He rushed on far in the lead of his men and fell, presumably because his exertion was more than his oxygen could counterbalance. He was found by his mates, carried back to the foot of the shaft and an hour later taken from the mine - dead.

Superintendent Roberts, head of the government department of instruction, accounted for his death as due to overexertion, the same as a man that falls from too much running up hill. Mr. Roberts stated that death was likely due to carbon-dioxide poison.

The bodies of the dead men were brought to the surface, one at a time, in the mine carriage. Members of the rescue crews and volunteers carried the bodies to a morgue that had been fitted up in the colliery carpenter shop. Ten platforms, each six inches high and large enough to hold five bodies, had been constructed of heavy planking and arranged on the floor of the shop.

The bodies were laid in rows of five on the wooden platforms. Each form was covered with blankets brought from the mine company store, and after being identified was marked with an

identification slip. A dozen undertakers with their wagons were on hand to remove the bodies to their

morgues.

P. O'Boyle, claim agent for the Scranton Coal company; George Cooper, secretary of the Miner's Accidental fund; John E. Jones, outside foreman at the colliery, and Carl Raymond, of this city, assistant paymaster for the company, looked after the identification of the bodies.

Found Lying Face Down.

All of the twenty-one bodies recovered up to midnight were found in groups of threes and fives, all lying face down in the ditch alongside the track. Many of them held handkerchiefs pressed against their faces, showing how they fought to resist suffocation. Farthest in of all of the twenty-one the body of Mine Foreman Walter Knight was found, lying face down. Knight had warned the men, driving them out before him, when he fell. Not far from the body of Knight the rescuers came upon the body of Fireboss Dawe. He too, dying for air, buried his face in the ditch.

As early as 3 o'clock in the afternoon it was evident that the men were all dead. The rescuing gangs had no more than penetrated past the burned engine house when they found three bodies. The smoke and heat was so intense where the rescuers worked that they who had entered the mine six hours after the fire had started, reeled and fell and requires stimulants to keep revived.

"What show have these men got?" said one grim workman, stepping from the carriage. "What chance have they got when the rescuers themselves are falling over? They're all dead. No man can live down there."

No attempt was made to take the bodies from the mine in daylight. Carrying bodies from a mine in the face of a crowd of 5,000 people, among whom were wives and children of the dead, would not have served to quiet the thousands that crowded against the ropes.

Instead of bringing the bodies to the surface they were laid out in blankets at the foot of the shaft as fast as they were found. When night set in, when men could move about and their movements not be read except by the dim glare of mining lamps fastened to caps, the work of taking out the bodies was begun; a work that did not cease until day again was beginning to break.

Up and down glided the carriage. Four little tingles of a bell was the signal for all that another body, maybe two or three, was to be hoisted from the mine. Clang, clang, clang, clang sounded the bell, then a mighty puff of the engine, a rumbling, roaring sound, the rattling of powerful steel ropes and another body was brought up, checked, identified, and the identity of the dead man whispered from ear to ear at the shaft's landing.

At 3:30 o'clock this morning, thirty-five bodies had been hoisted to the surface. The eight rescue crews at work in the mine had located seventeen other bodies, and the officials fear that at least a dozen more men have lost their lives in the chambers and cross-cuts.

Engineer Discovers Fire.

The fire started in the hoisting engine house at the head of the "North" slope, the converging point of the Dunmore and China veins. It was discovered by the slope engineer, James Moore. Moore's duty required him to tend two slope engines, the engine of the "North" slope and that of the "West" slope, some 200 feet from the "North" slope engine house. He alternated between the two engine houses, and while at the "West" slope house he saw smoke breaking from the other house. He, with other men working in that part

of the mine, started to battle the flames.

When the fire was discovered orders were given to "pipemen" to put it out before it made any headway. The order was given by Inside Foreman Walter Knight and Fireboss Isaac Dawe. Then Knight and Dawe, realizing the danger to the men in the tunnel, hurried off to warn them. On their way to the men they met John R. Perry, and told him of the fire. Perry joined them, dismissing his laborer with an order to get out at once. Knight, Dawe and Perry reached the men, but were overcome on their return to the head of the slope.

Though some underestimation of the seriousness of the fire, which broke out a little after 9 o'clock, the outside colliery officials continued the mine and breaker working until 11 o'clock. Meanwhile the forces below were fighting the fire with the best means at hand. When the situation finally was realized a fire call was sent out which brought the J. B. Dickson Hose company from Dickson City, a mile from the mine. A five-hundred foot line of hose was then lowered into the shaft, some fifty-feet from the main hoisting engine room. When the hose was lowered it burst from the pressure.

Trapped In Tunnel.

Meanwhile the force in the China vein was still in the blind tunnel with the only exit shut off by the burning engine house at the head of the slope. Where the men were working was 2,000 feet from the fire. It is surmised that these men were working on in ignorance of their danger until the smoke from the head of the shaft was driven to them with the current of air. Realizing then that there was a fire the men rushed for the foot of the shaft, only to drop overcome by the smoke. Three men whose bodies were the first found had reached almost to the engine house, indicating that the warning reached the men too late.

It was impossible to keep the smoke from the men. It could be done by closing down the air fan. But this measure would avail no relief. To shut off the air would leave the tunnel at the mercy of the gases, which would mean death from that cause to the men. The fans were kept working. Bratticing for providing artificial air courses was the only resort left. This was started. Men rushed to and from the store house carrying rolls of canvas, 150 feet to the roll, and these were lowered into the mine through the main hoisting shaft. Thus the colliery force worked in an effort to check the smoke, rather than the flames, from morning until afternoon.

Lackawanna Man Arrives.

C. E. Tobey, assistant general superintendent of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western coal department, arrived at the colliery at half past 12 o'clock. Told that there were men on the other side of the fire, Superintendent Tobey suggested that assistance should be sought and took it upon himself to volunteer the assistance from the Lackawanna's mine rescue car crew and also the government's mine rescue corps, stationed at Wilkes-Barre. Both crews were summoned by Mr. Tobey. The Lackawanna's crew was called from Kingston and arrived at the Pancoast at 3 o'clock, twelve strong. Five minutes later the government corps of twelve men commanded by Superintendent Charles Enzian and Foreman Joseph E. Evans, reached the colliery. They were ready to enter the mine ten minutes after their arrival.

Superintendent Enzian and Foreman Evans, equipped with oxygen helmets, oxygen cylinder tanks and a stick of potash, this for absorbing impurities, went into the mine at once, accompanied by Charles Johnson, of Parsons; Michael Clark, of Wyoming; Patrick Walsh, of Pittston; and George Kellam, a First-Aid superintendent, of Wilkes-Barre. In reserve, to relieve this squad, were Frank Jordan, of Wilkes-Barre; Reese Bennett, of Wyoming; Cyril Hammonds, Charles M. C. Manew, E. B. Dimmick, Thomas James and George Bleckner, all of the government crew of mine-accident rescuers. They came by the special car equipped with oxygen tanks and other paraphernalia and had their car backed into the coal

chute switch of the breaker.

Conflicting Reports.

There was no word from below, except as came from men leaving veins above the China. All of these reports varied. Some of the miners said that there were seventy-five men trapped. Others cut the number to fifty men and ten boys. Mores said that there could not be more than thirty-five, but all of them declared that there was little chance for any of the China vein tunnel men getting out. These men finally reported the fire out at 3 o'clock. Following them, however, came another squad of upper vein men, who reported that the fire was not only still burning, but that the timber work was on fire and the roof falling. The playing of the hose on the roof cracked the heated rock and caused it to chip and fall in layers.

Among the men that came out of the shaft when the carriage hoisted a half dozen or more was John Evans, assistant inside foreman, who emerged linked with two men at 4:35 o'clock. Evans came from the carriage in bad shape. He staggered along, supported by the two men to the hoisting engine room, where he was taken in hand by Dr. Jacobs and Dr. Murray. They gave him a hypodermic and other stimulants which soon brought him around. While he was under the treatment Evans declared that there was still a chance to get to the men if things were hurried. He refused to go to his home, but latter was prevailed upon to go and was taken home in a carriage.

Doctor Enters Mine.

At 4:40 o'clock the carriage was again hoisted from the fire vein to take down more rescue corps men. Three of them with the oxygen helmets and knapsacks strapped to their backs were lowered. The carriage descended and was up the next minute to take Dr. Jacobs into the mine. Twenty minutes later Dr. Jacobs was hoisted back to the surface. Jumping from the carriage he called for blankets and whiskey. A volunteer ran two blocks to the office of Dr. Murray and returned with a large sasparilla bottle filled with whiskey. Another volunteer rushed to the store room and returned with an armful of blankets. Dr. Jacobs in charge of the bottle and blankets, immediately re-entered the mine.

With him descended Harry Birtley, son of the colliery superintendent, who had been underground all of the afternoon. Young Birtley went down to try to persuade his father to leave the mine. "I will remain here until the last man is taken out" the father answered his son, and ordered the boy out of the mine. Superintendent Birtley, himself, was in an exhausted state. Dr. Jacobs noticed his condition and insisted on administering a hypodermic. It reached the surface that Superintendent Birtley had been overcome, but this report was contradicted by two rescuers who without hats or coats were hoisted at twenty minutes past five. These two men, themselves gasping for breath, rushed away and in another minute came running back carrying a First-Aid outfit. Both men got on the carriage, but neither man could speak for want of breath. "I can't talk," gasped one of them, when asked what the situation was below. The carriage descended with them, and ascending next minute, brought up Dr. Jacobs once more. This was at 5:20 o'clock. Dr. Jacobs called for more hypodermic, and announced that the situation looked "very bad." He re-entered the mine without further comment, except to give an order to Dr. Murray to remain at the entrance to the shaft.

Mine Inspector Enters.

Mine Inspector David J. Williams, whose jurisdiction includes the Pancoast colliery, arrived at the shaft entrance at 5:30 o'clock and was at once lowered to the China vein. On the carriage that he descended, Superintendent Birtley ascended. Superintendent Birtley on getting off the carriage ordered all hand fire extinguishers sent down. He went to his office, refusing to discuss the disaster or any of its details. He appeared worn out and on the verge of collapse.

"For God's sake, don't ask me any questions," he requested. "If you want to do me a favor, please don't ask me about this." With his leaving the mine came a report that "Joe" Evans, foreman of the government's rescue crew, had been overcome and was in bad shape. This report was confirmed at the same time by some of the minor officials directing the work from the surface. An hour later Mine Inspector Williams came out of the mine.

"Things are in bad shape down there," said he. "Evans has gone under. They are working hard to save him." The inspector declared that heat from the fire was so intense that rescuers could not penetrate to the tunnel. "We must first change the air before we can hope to reach the men. He, with many other men who kept coming up, expressed little hope of bringing out the imprisoned men alive. Inspector Williams said it could take four or five hours to dissipate the heat that walled off the rescuers and start a current of fresh air through the vein. The inspector returned to the shaft after a call at the colliery office, and was about to step on the carriage when Harry G. Davis, district superintendent of the Lackawanna, who came with the company's car from Kingston, suggested that Williams remain at the shaft entrance instead of re-entering the mine.

"Stay here until I send for you," suggested Superintendent Davis. "You stay here until I send for you," the inspector answered. "This is my district. I'll come and go as I feel like it."

Could Not Give Exact List.

There was still no definite statement given out by any of the colliery officials. Superintendent Birtley when asked for a list of names of the men supposed to be working in the tunnel, directed the office clerk to give out the list of names. The clerk answered that he could give a list of the names of all of the men working in the mine, but could not give the names of the men working in that particular part of the mine. Besides, he said, that it is doubtful if the men were known by their names or were registered on the company's books by numbers.

Four "helmet" men were hoisted from the shaft at 7 o'clock. They were accompanied to the landing by Superintendent Davis. The "helmet" men were ordered to go to their car and get a "fresh air" stretcher and an oxygen tank. They returned immediately with the stretcher, equipped with a respirator and oxygen tanks at its head and canvas hood to cover the face of the man rescued, so that whether conscious or unconscious air might be pumped into the lungs automatically. Three quarters of an hour later, at 7:45 o'clock, these same four "helmet" men were hoisted, carrying the stretcher with "Joe" Evans, foreman of the government's rescue squad, on it. Dr. Jacobs walked back of the stretcher bearers. "I believe he's dead, but we're still trying to get him," said the doctor. Evans, however, was then dead, though his breast rose and fell as if living. His head was covered with the respirator and hood and oxygen was still being pumped into the man's lungs.

Enzian Comes to Surface.

The four rescue men had only just carried the body of Evans from the carriage when it again descended, and then brought up Superintendent Enzian. Two aids supported him, staggering from the carriage. He had remained underground directing his men until he could direct no longer. He was revived soon after he got to his car standing on the breaker switch.

General Superintendent W. L. Allen came from the mine at 7:45 o'clock. He reported that the rescuers and First-aid men were fighting for their own lives below. He was unable to say how many were caught in the tunnel, or how many men had chambers there. An hour before that, as he was going into the mine, he announced that the fire was about out.

Ambulances Sent For.

Hope for the rescue of the men seemed to be abandoned at 8 o'clock. Up to that hour, they clung to the possibility of the men getting into some corner free of smoke. But at 8 o'clock all of the officials stated that they did not think there was a man alive in the tunnel. Superintendent Birtley, Outside Foreman John Jones and other officials, at the colliery office, gave orders that phone messages be sent to all undertakers within call that had ambulances. The ambulances of the Delaware and Hudson company were also pressed into service.

The scene at the colliery during the afternoon was typical of the mine disaster. Ropes were strung to keep the crowd back from the mouth of the shaft. Back of the ropes stood probably 3,000 men, women and children, during the hours of the afternoon. There was very little crying heard. Camera men rushing about with tripods for a "good position" were greeted with banterings of "look pleasant" and followed by crowds of boys eager to get in the photograph.

But there were some women who, with heads in shawls, faces drawn and serious looking, stood against the ropes anxiously waiting for some news from the China vein. These were the wives and mothers of the missing men.

When Darkness Falls.

When darkness came the scene changed. Gloomy looking "Black Marias" ratted up to the colliery office from all directions. It was the coming of darkness and the ambulances just as dark that the scene took on a different aspect. Here and there from the crowd came the sobbings of women, whose husbands were in the mine. Near the entrance to the mouth of the shaft a woman who had waited and waited from early morning became hysterical. She tried to break through the rope, but was held back by the crowd. Her husband was in the China vein.

The only vehicles that traversed Throop's streets after 8 o'clock were mine ambulances and undertaker's wagons, all headed for the colliery. After dark the crowd increased to 5,000. Crowds from Olyphant, Dunmore, and Scranton came by car, and alighting at "Cooper's corner," fell in behind the ambulances and truded through the mud to the mine. Along one street of the borough a woman walked, talking to herself.

"One lives in there; one lives in there; one lives in there; one lives in that house over there," she went on, pointing from house to house along the street where lived men numbered among the dead. A child walked at her side. "Who lives in there?" the child asked, but the mother did not answer.

When the crowd massed at the colliery it stopped at the roped enclosure. Chief of Police Michael Clancy and his two patrolmen of Throop had kept the crowd in hand during the afternoon with the assistance of a half dozen "specials." When dusk set in it became apparent that Chief Clancy would need help. There was a call about to be sent to Peckville for state troopers, but the colliery officers decided not to call the troopers. Instead, eight patrolmen of the Scranton force were dispatched to the mine, and they took charge of keeping the crowd in order. Superintendent of Fire, H. F. Ferber also was at the colliery to give any assistance of men or apparatus that might be required.

The Pennsylvania Coal company's rescue crew from South Pittston arrived at the colliery shortly after 7 o'clock. The eight men in the crew, in charge of their captain, Benjamin Milton, went into the mine to search for bodies. They found three bodies lying in the gutter on the main gangway, 1,000 feet in from the scene of the fire.

A few hundred feet farther in, they came upon a pile of nine other bodies, all the men face down in the gutter, some with handkerchiefs stuffed in their mouths and others with their coats wrapped around their heads. Rescuers carrying out the body of Foreman Knight passed the Pennsylvania [crew] nearly 1,500 feet from the engine house that burned. Mine Foremen George V. O'Hara, William Jeffrey, and John Williams were with the Pennsylvania crew.

Fallon Was Active.

There were many instances of unselfish loyalty of man to man about the mine. Frank Fallon, of Throop, a runner, was one of the first to see the fire. Fallon rushed along the slope, came up to Pat Connolly and shouted for him to get out. Fallon then ran at full speed to a place where Joseph Browning, seventy-one years old, was at work. Fallon seized the old man, and with the aid of an Italian laborer carried him out. Browning, a door tender, was too old to run. In all Fallon got word to eighteen men that there was a fire.

Owners of Mine.

The mine is the property of J. R. Bryden and Eddy and Dickson coal sales agents of New York. It is operated by the Scranton Coal company.

The Tribune-Republican, Scranton, PA Monday, April 10, 1911

**Total of Pancoast Dead is Seventy-Three -
Governor John K. Tener to Start Investigation -
Relief Fund Reaches Thousands -
Taft Wires Words of Sympathy**

HOW MEN DIED IN THE PANCOAST

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**Full Details of the Worst Catastrophe In Lackawanna Regions -
warning Sent By 'Phone, Say Officials of Company,
But No One Lives to Verify This Claim.**

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THROOP GRIEVES FOR AND BURIES ITS DEAD

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**Sad Episodes of the Disaster.
Mine Owner Dickson Issues Statement-
Chief Roderick Says It Will Revolutionize Laws-
Widows Number Fifty-six; Orphans, 123.**

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Latest Developments

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- **A telegram from Governor John K. Tener, received here last night by a prominent politician, states briefly that the governor will at once "start an investigation."**
- **Coroner James F. Saltry today will conduct an inquest to determine responsibility for the calamity.**
- **Five of the victims buried in Throop yesterday.**
- **Fifty-nine bodies have been identified.**
- **Ten remain unidentified.**
- **Chief James Roderick, of the state mine bureau, says disaster will "revolutionize mining methods."**
- **Mine Owner Joseph B. Dickson issues statement disclaiming company's responsibility.**
- **Claim made that telephone message was sent to men in "blind tunnel." Indications are that men had been warned.**
- **Undertakers make gruesome fight for bodies.**
- **Superintendent Birtley in critical condition, due to strain and worry.**
- **Mine rescue car leaves for Alabama.**

[Explosion on Saturday killed 128 at Pratt Consolidated Coal, Littleton, AL, 123 were convicts, all but 5 were negros.] -

Throop borough yesterday belonged to its dead. Death's insignia - the crepe - draped doors on every street. Carriages rattled through the town - but these carriages were for the dead - hearses or undertaker's work wagons. From houses resounded the cries of widows and orphans. From cemeteries came the wailings and lamentation of survivors.

Throughout the afternoon the bell of St. John's church tolled the knell of death. There was death present everywhere, even at the Pancoast colliery there were still vestiges of the horror of Friday last when seventy-three men and boys lost their lives through the burning of an engine house at the head of the "North" slope.

Compared with the scenes of Friday and Saturday, the grounds enclosing the Pancoast colliery were deserted. There were crowds coming and leaving the grounds throughout the afternoon, but those that came belonged not to Throop, but to surrounding towns even as far as Taylor.

Four In One House.

Those of Throop that were on the streets were mourners marching in bodies to the funeral of some victim, or crowded outside St. John's or St. Anthony's church, where the services were for the dead. Another crowd was massed on the sidewalk in front of a house on Charles street, where three crepes hung from the door. Four men lay dead in that house, three brothers and a cousin - the four bodies lying in one small room. The dead in this one house were Emil, John and Victor Wasczeniuk and Lawrence Posava, with one mourner - a little girl of seven, daughter of Emil.

At the colliery there was nothing to indicate that here took place the worst tragedy of the coal fields of Lackawanna county. Men in greasy clothes, carrying safety lamps, moved about the grounds, sometimes going into the mines by the men's repair shaft and coming from the mines by that shaft. These men were foremen, firebosses and workmen. The carriage was hoisted and lowered, taking men up and lowering them to the pit below. Women and girls, and a sprinkling of men gathered at the shaft, but these did not tarry long. There was nothing to be seen. There was nothing said.

Getting Ready for Work.

The men in greasy clothes were getting the mine in shape for a resumption of work the latter part of the week, probably Thursday. No attempt will be made to operate the mine before then. The China vein - the place where the seventy-two miners died - must be stripped and cleaned of all remembrances of the disaster, and besides the men that worked that vein are most all dead. The cleaning up consisted of removing rock and debris and dead mules. Ten cars of rock fallen from the roof near the destroyed engine house had been filled and stood at the foot of the shaft ready for hoisting to the surface. Seven dead mules, loaded a mule to a mine car, were taken out in the afternoon. The crowd left the grounds when the mules were hoisted.

A quarter mile north of the black colliery to a cemetery, that lies on a level lower than the grounds around the colliery, a hearse followed by a dozen carriages drove over Sanderson street, past the enclosed colliery and entered this cemetery. The cries of the mourners gathered around the grave were heard for blocks away and at the colliery. "That's one of the funerals," remarked a teamster at the colliery, coupling a team of mules to a mine car carrying another mule - dead.

Funerals.

While this burial was taking place, a procession of men marched up Sanderson street towards St. John's Slovak church. At this church was another funeral. A hearse stood outside. Two doors below the church stood another house, with crepe on it. The marchers were from the Pancoast Mine Accidental Keg Fund going in a body to attend another funeral, that of a member. Five funerals in all were held yesterday. Some fifty more funerals will take place in Throop alone today.

Officials of the company yesterday announced the number of dead at seventy-two, exclusive of Joseph E. Evans, foreman of the rescue car of the government's mining department. Sixty-two of the dead had been identified up to 8 o'clock last night. Paymaster William Appleman, who had charge of the work of tabulating and checking the dead, gave out a list of the sixty-two, saying that the other ten had been taken from the temporary morgue at the colliery and that those ten had probably been claimed during the day.

All during Saturday afternoon, women and men called at the paymaster's office to inquire for the whereabouts of the body of some husband, brother, relative, or boarder. The names of the undertakers that had taken unidentified bodies were given to these callers and they went away to visit the morgue where the unclaimed dead lay. There were no claimants of bodies at the paymaster's office yesterday, and from this, Mr. Appleman inferred, that the dead had all been claimed.

The officials of the company are already investigating the reason for the seventy-two men losing their lives. There are to be other investigations. The county authorities, the office of the district attorney and the coroner are to investigate to ascertain whether the catastrophe was the result of negligence. There is also to be an investigation by the government's department of mining. A thorough investigation will be made by the government, according to Dr. Holmes, head of the National Bureau of Mining. He was at the mine Saturday morning, entered the workings, inspected the China vein where the men met death and departed from the mine announcing that his investigation would be to the end that a recurrence of the disaster would be impossible.

Roderick to Probe.

The State Mining Bureau is to conduct an investigation. Mine Inspector David J. Williams, whose territory embraces the Pancoast colliery, has announced that he will investigate the fire to place the responsibility where it belongs. His chief, James E. Roderick, head of the State Bureau of Mining, was at the mine Saturday morning. He was rather emphatic in declaring that in his judgement the catastrophe could have been avoided.

"If proper care had been taken there would have been no fire," declared Chief Roderick. "I believe an inquest will establish many of the circumstances that now appear clouded. I don't know much about the fire, but I will have this information. I understand that the fire started at 8:30. If it did I am afraid that there was too much delay, though I feel that the men were dead a half hour after the fire started."

Continuing, Chief Roderick stated that he did not believe that there was a hard coal mine in Pennsylvania where such a disaster could have happened. "I want to say," he went on, "that it should not have happened. The engine house should have been of non-combustible material. I do not know of any law except common sense, that demands this. However, the law ought to demand it."

Company Wants Inquiry.

In the face of these statements by state authorities, the Pancoast officials declared yesterday that they invited the fullest investigation into the cause and result of the fire. William Reed, inside foreman, in the absence of Superintendent J. V. Birtley, who is in bed since the disaster, stated that the company courted an investigation by any department, individual or official. William H. Allen, district superintendent of the Scranton Coal company, who volunteered his services at the work of extinguishing the fire and recovering the bodies, made an inspection of the workings and after leaving the mine stated that no precaution for the protection of life, as required by law, had been overlooked. John R. Bryden, general manager of the Scranton Coal company, and a part owner of the Pancoast, declared yesterday after going through the workings of the China vein, that he was satisfied that there had been no negligence on the part of the men in charge of the operations of the colliery. President J. B. Dickson, who also entered the mine with General Manger Bryden, also expressed himself as satisfied that the mine foremen and those in direct charge had obeyed the law in every particular.

Notwithstanding the statements of the owners of the Pancoast and its officials, there was one official who stated that he believed the disaster will result in a revolutionizing of mining laws and methods. The laws, according to this official, do not go far enough. He said he could not see how a complete revision of the laws can now be overlooked.

"One thing that should result in the way of new laws," said this official, "is that there should be no more wood floors in engine houses inside the mine." This official went on to state that there must be a law compelling coal companies to erect mine engines on concrete foundations and steel or sheet metal sides to the engine house. The flooring of the Pancoast "North" slope engine house was of wood planking. The building itself was of yellow pine, twenty-four foot square.

Unions Protest.

Twenty-seven years ago the Knights of Labor protested against the building of an engine house at the head of a slope in the Pancoast mine, according to Representative John Shadrack, of Luzerne county, discussing the Pancoast tragedy. Mr. Shadrack was business agent of the mine worker's organization of that time. He declared the protest was made in vain and that he believed the engine house was the very same one which was burned Friday last with its resultant loss of life.

Partly recovered from the stunning shock occasioned by the disaster, survivors and officials yesterday were recalling a thousand and one incidents that marked the fight to save the men and the labors to recover their bodies. Themes discussed in the colliery office, on the streets, in front of churches where services were being held and at the homes of the victims were: How, Walter Knight, inside foreman, died; how old man Lawrence Raitz was found sitting at his door in the gangway; how Fireboss Isaac Dawe was found; how and where the bodies of the workmen were discovered; how the undertakers fought and framed up schemes to get bodies from the temporary morgue and every phase of the disaster

from the beginning of the fire until the last body was taken out Saturday at 1 o'clock. This was the body of Louis Wargo.

Raitz Drinking.

The strangest tale of death told was that concerning old man Raitz. A survivor of a score of accidents that maimed and left him unable to continue as a miner, Raitz became a door-tender. He was found sitting at his door on a block of wood. Between his knees he held a two-quart lard pail with his dinner in it. He had sat down to take a bite between "trips." He held the pail between his knees and was raising his tea flask to his lips when he died. The searches found him sitting there, the pail between his knees, his flask upraised - stark dead.

On all sides the best word for the undertaker was bitter condemnation for "ghoulish tactics." Workmen and officials declared that the conduct of the undertakers was "disgraceful." One undertaker was openly accused of giving men money to accompany him to the temporary morgue and claim bodies as those of brothers and relatives so that the undertaker could have the burial. They were accused of wrangling for a particular body, one official described it as "dogs that saw a bone and were eager to get at it," and with resorting to every trick to obtain bodies whether sent for the bodies or not. P. J. O'Boyle, claim agent for the Scranton Coal company, who assisted the mine officials in the surface work, ejected one undertaker from the temporary morgue.

In some instances the wrong body was taken to a house. The body of John Youhas was taken to the house of Joseph Andronovitch. Youhas the day before had shaven off his moustache, which changed his appearance. The undertaker was sent for the body of Andronovitch and mistook the body of Youhas for that of the man he was sent for. Youhas was in the country only three months. His family is in the old country. Henry Lucas, eighteen years old, a driver, the only support of his mother, went to the mine late for work Friday morning. He found another boy working in his place. So desirous was young Lucas to work that day that he prevailed upon the other boy to quit. Lucas replaced him. He died with the others.

"There is a child that is lost," remarked a man in the crowd that stood back of the ropes Friday night when the work of taking out the bodies was under way, pointing to a little girl with yellow locks that ran crying about from place to place.

"That's Julius Wargo's little girl," another man answered. Wargo two weeks ago buried his wife. A week ago he made his will. They took his body out. The only person there to claim it was the little girl with golden hair.

When the body of Steve Ostrosky, driver, was uncovered in the morgue at the colliery, a woman with a thin shawl over her head elbowed through the door and rushed up to the spot where the stretcher-bearers placed the body. The woman was the boy's mother. An undertaker's wagon backed up to the door and the body was placed in a basket and carried to the wagon. Mrs. Ostrosky followed. When she saw the basket placed in the wagon, she climbed to the seat and rode to the undertaker's morgue with the driver.

Such scenes were witnessed on all sides during the removal of the bodies from the mine. The body of William Gregson, of North Scranton, was borne into the temporary morgue. "That's Bill Gregson," said a miner, identifying the body. "He sent to England a week ago for his family."

John Chanagusky entered the morgue Saturday morning. In broken English he inquired for his boy. An attendant stepped across the room and drew back a blanket from the body of a young man. Chanagusky bent down, clasped the body in his arms and sobbed, "My boy."

Edward Hart, of North Scranton, had worked up to Thursday last in one of the upper veins. He was in the China vein for the second day Friday. He lost his life too.

Isaac Dawe, fireboss, was to have celebrated the tenth anniversary of his marriage Saturday. He had the arrangements made. His friends had also planned to tender him a surprise, and among those friends were a dozen men who died with him. Dawe was a first aide devotee. He believed in it, practiced "first aid" work with other mine workers nights and it is believed that his zeal in that direction was in a measure responsible for his death.

The saddest scene of the many in the borough is at the Wasczeniuk house on Charles street. Four bodies lie there in a room so small that the four bodies take up practically all the space. The bodies are laid out, two on each side of the room. The head of the house, Emil Wasczeniuk, and his two brothers and his cousin, together with one or two boarders and his seven year-old daughter made up the household. His wife and four children returned to Europe a year ago. Emil Wasczeniuk and his daughter were to join them in Europe next month.

The number of widows made by the accident was given out at the colliery as fifty-six; the number of orphans 123. This calculation was based on reports made at the colliery office as to the size of the families of the victims. Thirty-six of the victims were members of the Modern Woodmen of America. They were each insured for \$500.

Six more were members of the First National Slovak union. Michael Bosak, treasurer of the society was in Throop yesterday visiting the homes of the dead members. Each member's family will receive \$1,000. All of the victims were members of the Pancoast Mine Accidental Keg fund. The treasury of the fund has \$1,300. The death benefits due to survivors will amount to \$7,000.

The council of Throop borough met yesterday and passed a resolution urging that a public mass meeting be held today. The meeting will be for the purpose of naming a committee to take charge of funds to be raised for the benefit of the orphans and widows of the victims.

Edward Eisle, treasurer of the New Schiller Building and Loan association, announced Saturday that the association will pay all moneys owing to widows of investors in the association on demand. There were at least ten miners who invested in the New Schiller.

One Man Missing.

Relatives of Gojpak Adams, aged twenty-one years, a resident of Priceburg, who was supposed to be working in the China vein of the Pancoast, yesterday started a search for the young man, who is supposed to be dead in the tunnel, where seventy-two other men lost their lives.

Funeral Director George Prokopovitch made a tour of the morgues in the Mid-Valley yesterday in search of the young man who has been in this county only three months. The body had not been found up to 2 o'clock this morning. The tunnel of the China vein is to thoroughly searched this morning. Adams was employed as a laborer. He went to work Friday morning.

The government rescue car which went from Wilkes-Barre to Throop Friday afternoon with a squad of twelve rescue men, left Throop yesterday morning at 2 o'clock for Banner, AL. The rescue men accompanied the car. It was this car that Joseph E. Evans was foreman of. Evans lost his life in trying to get into the tunnel where the seventy-two men were.

Superintendent Joseph V. Birtley was reported yesterday to be in a serious way from strain and nervous breakdown incident to the disaster. Mr. Birtley is sixty-five years old. He has been in charge of the Pancoast mine for six years, and been employed there sixteen or eighteen years in different official capacities.

Coroner J. F. Saltry has not as yet fixed a time for holding an inquest. It is expected that he will decide on a time this week. Benjamin McEnany, president, and John T. Dempsey, secretary, of District No. 1, United Mine Workers of America, are also making searching inquiries into the disaster. The point that the United Mine Workers are interested in is that the mine was continued working for two hours after the fire was discovered.

Dead Number Seventy-Three.

Seventy-three men lost their lives in the Pancoast mine fire according to the statement given by the officials of the Price-Pancoast Coal company. Seventy-two of the men were employees of the company, and the seventy-third was Joseph E. Evans, of this city, foreman of the United States rescue car.

The origin of the fire and the entrapping of the miners in the tunnel where they were smothered is still somewhat surrounded by mystery. Men who worked in the rescue crews and mine employees who tried to extinguish the fire in the early morning when it had only started, tell stories of the fire that are in conflict with the statements of the company officials. The officials declare that provisions in the mining statutes that require second openings for men working in the mine have been lived up to. Miners who have spent years in the Pancoast workings declare that some of these openings were impassable for men. One of the shafts between the veins, they say, was used to carry pipes leading from the pumps. The length of the tunnel where the men were smothered and the ramifications of the air course, made it impossible for the entrapped men to get out before the smoke made breathing impossible.

How the Fire Started.

The fire started shortly after 8 o'clock in the North slope engine house, a wooden structure, with a heavy yellow pine plank flooring under the engines. Joseph Moran, the engineer, was at another engine house 200 feet distant, looking after that plant, his duties being to run both pair of engines. Moran says he was away from the North slope engine house about twenty minutes, and when he returned the place was on fire. Moran called assistance and eight men, including Mine Foreman, Paul Bright, Burgess Oliver Simpson, a miner, and Barn Boss James McNulty ran to the burning engine house. Coils of hose, chemical fire extinguishers and other fire fighting paraphernalia were inside the engine house, but the men could not get to them on account of the fire.

The North slope engine house is about 200 feet from the foot of the shaft that opens on the surface. The men had to go to the foot of the shaft for hose, and tap the water pipe leading to the engine house before a supply of water was available. By this time the flames had increased in volume, but were not considered to be serious or to mean any danger to the men in the North slope or the East tunnel which diverges from the slope at an angle of close to ninety degrees. However, the company officials say, a warning was sent in to the men in both workings to make their way out, as the smoke was getting denser and the air current driving it into the workings.

Say They Sent Warning.

This warning was sent by telephone, it is said, by Foreman William Reed. The mine is equipped with a telephone system, with one station at the foot of the shaft, and others in the interior of the mine. One of these stations is midway in the East tunnel and is called Perry's station, after John R. Perry, the Scranton

common councilman, who died in the smoke. The station is located at a door that opens from the tunnel road into Perry's gangway. Foreman Reed says the door tender at this place was notified by phone from the foot of the shaft of the danger very shortly after the fire started. Whether or not a man ever received this reported warning will never be known. None of the men who escaped from the mine had heard of this telephone message being received. The phone message alleged to have been sent in might have been received by one of the seventy-two victims, but, of course, these cannot either verify or deny the claim made by the officials of the company, as the burning engine house blocked the passage no one carried a warning from the shaft side to the men.

The only other warning the men may have received might have come from Foreman Walter Knight, whose dead body was found one thousand feet from the scene of the fire. Knight was on the mine side of the engine house when the fire broke out.

There were 100 men at work in the North slope. The smoke from the burning engine house followed an air current for several hundred feet, and was then sucked down into the North slope through an air intake shaft. Another air current deflected some of this smoke into the East tunnel, where the seventy-two men who perished were at work.

Trip of Cars Burn.

A narrow cross-cut, twenty-feet long, separated the burning engine house on one side from the East tunnel. At the point where this cross-cut opened on the tunnel, a trip of twenty mine cars, all coupled and ready to be pulled into the tunnel was standing. The fire fighters apparently were not aware that the wooden mine cars were so close to the fire, and kept turning water on the engine house from another side. The heavy air draft carried the flames from the oil soaked yellow pine engine house to the timbering in the cross-cut leading [to] the mine cars until the cars were ablaze. As soon as the cars started to burn the smoke and flame was carried in its heaviest volume into the East tunnel, bringing with it death to the seventy-two men in that tunnel.

Before the fire had gained much headway the men in the North slope began to come out of the workings. The first twenty or thirty got past the intake air shaft before the smoke became very dense. After that the men staggered out, some supported by their comrades, others carried bodily. Every one of the hundred men in this slope reached the surface safely.

The men fighting the fire began to worry for the safety of the seventy-two men in the East tunnel.

John Mihalik, twenty-three years old, a runner, entering the tunnel road from an off-shoot gangway, smelled the smoke and warned a number of miners to get out. Another runner, "Preacher" Fallon, told other miners that the main tunnel road was filled with smoke. Company officials say all men were warned, but the few who escaped say they received no warning from the officials.

Depend on Knight.

It was fully a hour after the engine house started to burn that the cars on the tunnel track caught fire, and during this time the bosses who were directing the fire fighting gang felt sure, they say, that the men were safe, basing their confidence on the fact that Foreman Walter Knight, who knew every inch of the mine, was with them and would lead them to safety. Work was continued in the other veins of the mine, and coal was being hoisted to the breaker all the time. No smoke was issuing from the shaft and there was nothing on the surface to indicate the condition inside the mine.

The fire fighting crew at the engine house had been augmented until more than a score of employees and

foreman were at the house. When it was seen that the mine cars had caught fire, these men realized the danger of the men in the East tunnel and called for more help. A glance convinced Superintendent Birtley that the men in the tunnel were in a bad way, but there was still hope, the men thought, in that Foreman Knight was with them. It was decided to call outside help, and the rescue crews of the Lackawanna and Pennsylvania companies were sent for. Later the United States rescue car was called.

Just what happened in the tunnel where the men were smothered will remain a mystery. Foreman Knight and Fireboss Dawe were making their rounds in that section of the mine when the fire started. After the fire was extinguished Friday evening the rescuers on entering the tunnel found Dawe's body less than 100 feet inside. He had been making his way to the foot of the shaft to see what the trouble was, the rescuers say. Knight was found 1,000 feet farther in the tunnel and had been going away from the fire, rescuers say, to warn the men. All along the tunnel road bodies of men were huddled, their faces in the gutter. Other bodies were found throughout the chambers off the main road. The men on the main road had been fighting against the smoke. Those in the chambers and cross-cuts, the officials say, were seeking safety along the return air course that led to the shafts where ladders reached to the upper veins. The mine officials say that all of the men must have been suffocated within ten minutes after the mine cars at the engine house caught fire. They declare, though, that the men had been warned and to prove that assertion point out that in nearly every instance the men who were found dead had their cans and lamps with them and had left their mine chambers in order, there being no evidence of hasty flight or panic.

Dies Without Warning.

In conflict with the official statement that all the men had been warned, the rescuers tell of finding the body of Lawrence Raitz, a 61-year-old door-tender, sitting as if he had been eating his lunch. His dinner pail was open between his knees, they say, and his coffee bottle raised halfway to his lips.

The tunnel in which the seventy-two men worked is approximately 2,000 feet long. The smoke from the burning engine house and mine cars was picked up in a current of air that was fed into the tunnel at the rate of 30,000 cubic feet a minute, Mine Foreman William Reed said yesterday. This smoke was swirled along the tunnel and into the chambers where the men were at work. The only escape possible for the men was to run ahead of the smoke until they came to the ladders reaching through to the upper veins. Some of the men would have to run almost a mile to reach those ladders and their course would go through devious chambers and cross-cuts. The smoke traveled too fast to permit their escape, once the mine cars caught fire. The men working close to the tunnel road could follow the air course to the upper end of the tunnel and come back on the return air course on the other side of the tunnel to the shaft closest to the fire. Other men could work their way to other shafts, if they had a hour to do so, but the smoke came on them much quicker than that.

Death of John Perry.

John Perry, the North Scranton councilman, who lost his life in the fire, worked in a gangway that deflected at almost right angles from the tunnel, almost 1,000 feet from the fire. Mihalik, the runner, had just taken a trip of cars from that gangway when he smelled the smoke and run in several hundred feet to warn Perry and his laborer. Perry came to the main tunnel with Mihalik and two foreigners, both laborers. Mihalik said he could lead the way to safety through the return air course, by crawling through a small opening a short distance from the mine door that opened on Perry's gangway. Perry refused to accompany Mihalik, but the two foreigners went with him and escaped through the slope, behind the engine house. Perry went back to his gangway, but fell just as he opened the mine door. The rescuers found his body squeezed between the door and the mine rib.

In one place a group of five bodies were found by the searchers between two rude doors they had

constructed of canvas, in an attempt to shut off the smoke. Another group of five men was found nearly 2,000 feet away from the fire and near an air shaft. They had smashed down the brattice work near the air shaft and had died only a few steps from safety.

Fighting the Flames.

While the men in the tunnel were being smothered, scores of rescuers were at work trying to extinguish the fire so as to reach them. The United States rescue crew, the Lackawanna company rescue crew, and dozens of volunteers worked heroically in an attempt to put out the fire. Joseph M. Evans, of the rescue car, wearing a fifty-pound oxygen apparatus and helmet, led the fire fighters, and was backed by his chief Charles Enzian. Before the fire had been completely extinguished, Evans ran ahead of his men several hundred feet, and had passed Councilman Perry's body, when he dropped. His over exerting himself had interfered with the mechanism of the oxygen helmet, and he died of suffocation. Every effort was made to resuscitate Evans by members of his crew and physicians who were on hand.

It was late Friday afternoon before people at the surface of the mine had any intimation of the danger of the men in the East tunnel. The breaker had worked until 11 o'clock, and though the people outside knew there was a fire, they deemed that the firemen of the company had it under control. The arrival of the Lackawanna rescue crew, then the coming of the United States rescue car, the calling of policemen from this city, and firemen from Dickson City early in the afternoon, were the first intimation the people outside the mine had of the seriousness of the fire. The rapid hoisting and lowering of the carriage, men staggering from it to outside shops, the doctors being lowered in the mine, and finally at 8 o'clock in the evening, the hoisting of Evans's dead body from the pit, and announcement that every one of the seventy-two miners had perished, followed one another in rapid succession, leaving the throng of 10,000 men and women around the mine stunned, and banishing the hopes of fifty-five wives and 140 children that their husbands and fathers were still alive.

Mr. Reed Tells Story.

Mine Foreman William Reed, who had been in charge of the workings in the China vein up to eight months ago, when he was injured in a fall of roof, returned to Throop Saturday from Atlantic City. Foreman Knight, one of the victims, had been filling Reed's place and would have turned the work over to Reed again this week.

Mr. Rees was at the mines all day yesterday. He had hardly recovered from his injuries, but he lent a ready hand to the work. Mr. Reed said that he did not know how the fire started, but gave as his opinion that some employee entered the engine room in Engineer Moran's absence and by either knocking the ashes out of a pipe or trimming a mine lamp let a few sparks drop on the floor and went out. The oil-soaked timbers caught fire from the sparks, Mr. Reed believes, he said, and by the time Moran returned had gained headway.

Mr. Reed explained Moran's running two engines by declaring that one of these engines handled less than forty-five cars of coal a day and takes only a few hours' work. He said that if a second engineer had been employed the rules of the mine would permit him to go home as soon as the forty-five cars had been pulled up the plane, and anyone might enter the engine house after that time, thus creating the same condition that existed when Moran's engine house took fire.

The working of the colliery until 11 o'clock, Mr. Reed said, had been done to allay the fears of other employees and people outside, and he explained that no matter how great the fire in the North slope and East tunnel became, the other employees would not be endangered.

Says Death Was Sudden.

"The men must have been dead in ten minutes after the cars took fire," Mr. Reed said, "because the smoke was blown directly into them. If they had time they could work their way out, but they had no chance. We have the best equipped mine in the valley. We have hose connections in every place a fire is apt to start, and nearly every chamber in the China vein has a hose connection. The engine house was equipped with extinguishers and lines of hose. We have done everything to safeguard the men. Superintendent Birtley has been so strict that it was worth a man's job to leave a piece of cotton waste in an exposed place. A three-inch pipe leads from outside tanks into the mine and furnishes water at the highest pressure wherever it might be needed. We did everything possible, but here this fire comes in the engine house, and seventy-two of our men are dead."

Another Explanation.

Mr. Reed also explained that if the mine officials had shut off the air supply, or reversed the fans so as to clear the tunnel of smoke, mine gas would form. This gas, he said, would in every probability be ignited by the lamps the miners wore, since they would have no warning that the air supply had been changed or shut off. The resultant explosion, it was explained, would not only kill the men in the tunnel, but endanger the other men in the mine and probably blow the top off the breaker and kill scores of men, women and boys who had gathered outside.

Other foremen at the mine gave out statements similar to that of Mr. Reed. Each told of the fire-fighting equipment in the mine and of the care that had always been taken to prevent fire. One of the men, however, mentioned a fire that had occurred in the mine a year or more ago, in which a pump house was destroyed, because the fire fighters could not get at the hose and extinguishers inside the pump house after the fire started.

Officials Enter Mine.

Joseph B. Dickson, of New York, president of the Price-Pancoast company; Frank G. Wolfe, chief engineer; W. L. Allen, general superintendent, and Fireboss Vickers were lowered into the mine shortly before noon yesterday. Mr. Dickson explored the region of the fire, going as far as the ladder that connected the China vein with the vein above and provided one means of escape for the entombed men, had they been able to reach it. This ladder was standing in good condition yesterday. Friday night the rescuing parties found several bodies near the ladder, the men having fought their way that far before falling exhausted. Mr. Dickson spent more than an hour in the mine workings. John R. Bryden, general manager of the company, and part owner of the mine, waited in the mine office until Mr. Dickson came up from the China vein.

Mr. Dickson's Statement.

Mr. Dickson issued the following statement: "This calamity is a terrible shock to us, and we simply cannot understand how it happened. I speak from personal knowledge when I say that no expense was spared to make this colliery a model of safety. While the anthracite mine laws are the strictest that exist, we have never been content merely to obey them to the letter. We have co-operated with the state inspectors in every way possible to make conditions safe, putting in life-protecting equipment and asking the state authorities for whatever suggestions that they might offer for improvements. Any of the officials who have had occasion to know of the mine will testify to this.

As a result of our precautions, more than once we have been complimented by the inspectors on the unusually thorough system of protection. Of course, this does not explain the terrible accident, nor does it

mitigate the suffering, but it shows that we did everything in our power to prevent such a thing.

As fast as the workings were extended, we extended our fire-protecting pipe lines, so that water would be available at every part of the mine. In this instance the fire seems to have spread so rapidly that, in spite of our safeguards, the men could not apply the water promptly enough. How the fire actually started is still a mystery. There is no combustion in the mine. The steam is produced in the boiler house on the surface of the ground and sent down through pipes to the engines underground.

The ventilation was made as near perfect as it could be made. There are three fans with a total capacity of some 700,000 cubic yards of air a minute. The quantity of fresh air per man employed is nearly four times as great as the law requires.

We have always employed the best talent obtainable to operate the mine. There is not a more capable and careful mine management anywhere in the anthracite region, and the record of the disaster shows that foremen and bosses were at their posts of duty among the men, where they should have been.

All of the buildings and equipment are of the best type. The shaft is concrete lined; the fan house, engine house and other houses on the surface are fireproof. The hoisting machinery is the best that money can buy, with all the latest devices and attachments designed to insure safety."

The Pancoast colliery has been in operation for nearly thirty years. In 1903, following a fire that destroyed the breaker the operations were brought up to the highest standard. The present breaker is one of the best equipped in the region. When the colliery works full time 1,400 men and boys are employed in it, and between 1,000 and 1,100 cars of coal are hoisted daily. In the China vein nearly 400 men are employed.

The work of cleaning out the mine will be continued today and tomorrow, and it is expected work at the colliery will be resumed Thursday.

Rescuers Are Through.

The rescuers and searching parties remained in the mine until late Saturday afternoon looking for bodies. Many of these men had worked from the time the fire started Friday morning. Coffee and sandwiches were served them in the mine, or when they came to the surface carrying the body of one of their comrades in a basket. The first body was hoisted to the surface at 10 o'clock Friday night. It was that of Fireboss Dawe. All through the night the searchers explored the East tunnel in their search for the dead. Gang after gang went into the innermost workings, searching every chamber and cross-cut. At 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon the body of Julius Wargo was hoisted out of the mine and the searching parties announced that no more bodies were in the mine. Wargo's body was the seventy-third to be taken from the China vein.

The search continued, however, until every inch of the North slope and the East tunnel had been explored. Yesterday morning another gang went into the mine and searched again. Last night it was definitely announced that the last body had been taken from the mine.

The work of cleaning out the tunnel and hoisting the mules that had been smothered was taken up yesterday morning. Seven dead mules were taken to the surface and scores of cars of rock cleared from the tunnel. The fire had burnt out props and timbers that sustained the roof, and the roadway was blocked with large slabs of coal and rock that had fallen. In taking out the dead, the searching parties had to leave the main tunnel road a short distance in from the fire and make their way through cross-cuts and chambers.

The East tunnel, where the men were smothered, contains thirty-four working places, or chambers. Two men are employed in each chamber, making sixty-eight miners and laborers. Seven driver boys, three runners, a half-dozen door tenders and four company hands make up the working force of the tunnel, a total of eighty-eight men. Fourteen of the men had not reported for work Friday morning, four escaped, and the other seventy with Foreman Knight and Fireboss Dawe perished.

In the North Slope.

Of the 100 men who were at work in the North slope when the fire started and who fought their way to safety, many had narrow escapes. Some of these men had to quit the main slope road and make their way through cross-cuts and chambers. Joseph Gall, a runner, was one of the first to smell and realize the danger the 100 men were in. He ran through the chambers warning the men, and eighteen started to follow him. Gall took the men through some old workings until he came to an airway that opened on the East tunnel. He says he heard Mihalka [Mihalik], the runner who escaped from that tunnel, crying to two foreigners to follow him, and he would lead them to safety. Gall shouted to Mihalik to descend to the airway and he would lead them to safety.

Instead of descending the shaft, however, Mihalik says he made his way through an airway over which at one time he had hauled timber. With John Perry's laborer and another foreigner Mihalik fought through this smoke filled place until he had passed the intake shaft near the engine house.

Gall continued through the old workings in the North slope with eighteen men, their hands joined behind him, and reached the surface safely. The other men struggled through the smoke in gangs of eight and ten, the strong helping the weak, men carrying boys, and young men carrying helpless old men. "Preacher" Fallon and a laborer he impressed into service, carried 71-year-old Joseph Browning, a door tender to safety. Men fell on the road, but were lifted by their companions, and helped through the smoke. It was close to 11 o'clock before the last of the hundred North slope miners had reached the pure air beyond the burning engine house.

Transcribed and contributed by Richard M. Reese, 2001

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