

The company now has twenty-five dwelling houses and a hotel erected, and the Hillsboro Building and Loan Company is building twenty-five more houses. The location of the shaft is very good, as little grading for yard work will be required. The houses for the men and families are located where there is a very fine view of the surrounding country and a good location for a town.

The Peabody Mining Co. has secured a large tract of coal land near Nokomis, Montgomery county, on the lines of the C. C. C. & St. L. and Frisco roads, and is now sinking a shaft; the company expects to reach the coal seam eight and one-half feet thick at 650 feet in depth from the surface.

The Trutter Coal Co., Springfield, Sangamon county, is sinking a new shaft on the line of the B. & O. R. R., four miles west of Springfield. The main shaft is now down to the coal, 174 feet, the coal seam is about six feet thick.

The Mechanicsburg Coal Co., Mechanicsburg, Sangamon county, is sinking a new shaft one and one-half miles from that town on the line of the Illinois Traction Co.'s road.

Several new local mines have been opened out and others have been abandoned during the year.

FIRES AT MINES.

Dec. 10, 1904, the tower, locomotive chutes and outbuildings of the Woodside Coal Co., Springfield, were destroyed by fire, the origin of the fire is supposed to have been caused by sparks from passing locomotives. Twenty-eight mules were suffocated. The fire occurred at night; some twelve or fourteen men were working in the mine, but got out safely by the escapeway. Every thing has been rebuilt and the mine commenced work again Jan. 18, 1905.

Dec. 19, 1904, the top works at the Wm. H. Bates mine at Winchester, Scott county, were destroyed by fire. Engine, boiler house, blacksmith shop, wagon scale, shed and locomotive chutes were all destroyed. The fan-house was untouched; all of the mules were saved, being hoisted out of the escape shaft by the men; fortunately there were no men at work in the mine when the fire broke out. This fire was also said to have originated from sparks from passing locomotives. All of the buildings destroyed have been rebuilt and the mine is now at work.

EXPLOSION IN MINES.

November 11, 1904, at 1:15 a. m., an explosion occurred in the Peabody Mining Co.'s mine at Sherman, Sangamon county, because of which James McGee and Anton Maruscha lost their lives. I visited the mine the next day, November 12, in company with James Smith, county inspector of Sangamon county. The following is a detailed report of our inspection, accompanied by a map showing where the explosion took place, the location of the various exploded powder kegs which had been ignited by the blast, also other points.

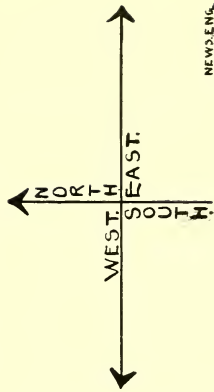
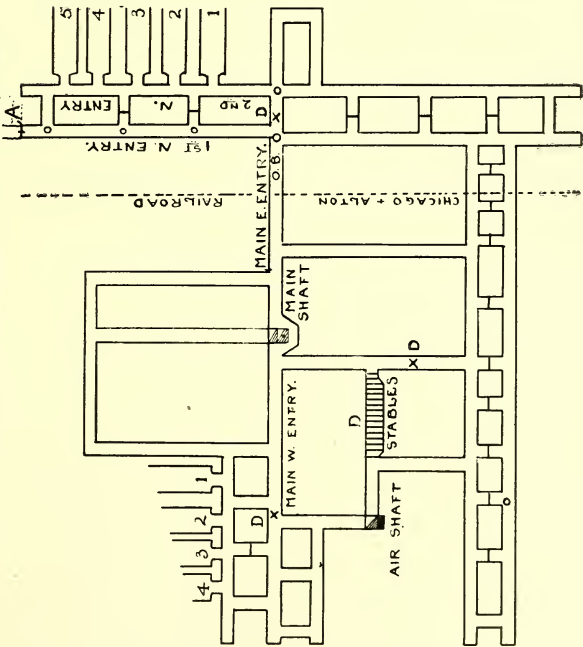
The explosion occurred in the first north entry off the main east entry on the east side of the mine; in this latter entry Anton Maruscha, one of the men killed, was working. The entry had been worked in a distance of 311 feet from the main east entry, the face of the entry was 70 feet from the last open cross-cut, and work had been commenced to drive the next cross-cut through at 60 feet.

Three shots had been prepared and fired in the face; a top hole, and a bottom hole directly underneath, also a top hole at right angles to the other holes in the cross-cut; the two holes in the entry had been drilled in a line with the left rib of the entry, and both had been placed in the solid, with no chance whatever to bring down the coal; there was also a roll in the roof, running diagonally across the face of the entry for four feet back from the face, that still further prevented the shots from dislodging the coal. The bottom hole it was found, had blown off part of the heel of the shot, but left 11 inches of the remaining hole; the top hole had blown its tamping, also about six inches was blown off the mouth of the hole, and twenty-seven inches remained dead. The hole in the

PLAT SHOWING WHERE EXPLOSION OCCURED IN THE MINE OF THE PEABODY MINING COMPANY.
 SHERMAN, SANGAMON COUNTY, ILLS. NOV. 17th 1904.

REFERENCE.

- A. WHERE WINDY SHOTS WERE FIRED.
- B. MARUSCHA BODY WAS FOUND.
- C. WHERE M^{rs} GEE'S BODY WAS FOUND.
- D. WHERE POWDER KEGS WERE FOUND THAT HAD BEEN EX-FLODED.
- D. WHERE DEAD MULES WERE FOUND.
- X. WHERE TEMPORARY DOORS HAD BEEN ERECTED TO CONDUCT THE VENTILATION.



NEW ENGL.

crosscut was 15.5 feet from the two holes on the left rib in the entry, and was a stiff hole blowing the heel but leaving 10.5 inches of the remaining hole dead.

At the last open crosscut, seventy feet from the face, pieces of cut fuse were found, and also small portion of the lid of a powder-box with the staple and padlock attached; the balance of this box could not be identified in the wreckage lying around. At, or opposite, the mouth of the first north entry, about twelve feet from where the body of Maruscha was found, a powder keg was found that had been exploded; also at the mouth of the second north entry on the main east entry, twenty feet from the first north entry on the main east entry, another powder keg was found, also exploded.

The body of Maruscha was found against the south side of the main east entry and about seventeen feet diagonally from the mouth of first north entry, and about 328 feet from the face of the first north entry, and about 275 feet from the hoisting shaft. In the back entry, or second north entry, the face of the entry was fifty-five feet from the open cross-cut; in this entry there are five rooms turned; room 5 is turned twenty-three feet outside of the last open cross cut, and is worked in eighteen feet from the entry. One keg full of powder, and one partly full were found in this entry, the full keg was in the room and the other one on the entry.

The body of James McGee was found in what is known as the west escape-entry, on the west side of the mine, at a distance of 575 feet from the hoisting shaft, also 1,178 feet from the face of the first north entry and 275 feet from the air shaft.

The explosion was of considerable violence, on the east side of the mine the stoppings were blown out and large timbers on the main east entry were knocked down, letting down large masses of rock and strewing debris in all directions, the south cage was jammed into a twisted mass of iron. At the bottom and in the west escapement entry, where McGee was found, the pit cars were piled together; the stairs were blown down in the escape shaft, and the fan house wrecked, as was also a part of the steel sheeting covering the tippel at the hoisting shaft. The stable was set on fire, owing to hay catching fire from the flames and five mules were burned to death. The bodies of the two men were terribly burned, and the head of Anton Maruscha was badly mangled by being crushed against the rib of the entry.

CAUSE OF EXPLOSION.

There is no doubt but that these three shots were all fired at the same time, and by fuse, as pieces of fuse had been found at the open cross cut where the powder box had been found. The holes had been very badly placed, and consequently the whole force of the powder was expanded on the atmosphere, producing what is commonly known as windy shots: conditions were further aggravated by one of the shots being at right angles to the other two, the carbonic oxide gases given off by these shots being ignited from the flame of the shots; the flames passing out to the cross-cuts. At the first open cross cut from the face, where the shots were fired, Maruscha's box was standing, in which he kept his powder; and, as this box was blown to pieces, it must have contained a quantity of powder, which exploding, intensified the force of the blast; also the flames following the explosion, set off other powder, still further intensifying the force of the blast, as four kegs were found that unmistakably had been exploded; thus making more intense the force of the explosion, this, together with the force of the blast going against the incoming air, caused it to extend to the west side of the mine, following the path of the least resistance to the escapement or air-shaft, where, at that point, it would have the effect of a huge piston, driving the air up the tube-like air shaft with an enormous pressure and velocity, stripping all obstructions in its path. The flames following the explosion, also passed to the west side of the mine, and going through the stable, setting fire to the hay, and other combustible matter, and burning fatally the five mules. The flames also passed up the west escape entry to where McGee was found, as his body was terribly burned; here also was found a keg of powder that had been exploded. I do not believe that dust was a factor in this explosion, as I could not find any traces of charred coal dust.