

Tons of coal consumed at mines.....	106,864
Number of fatal accidents.....	11
Number of non-fatal accidents.....	119
Total number of accidents.....	130
Number of employes to each fatal accident.....	423
Number of employes to each non-fatal accident.....	39
Tons of coal produced to each fatal accident.....	305,249
Tons of coal produced to each non-fatal accident.....	28,216
Average value per ton of lump coal at the mine.....	\$0.8513
Aggregate value of total product.....	\$2,573,100
Average number of days worked during the year.....	199

The present year has been one of general activity in the coal business, and there have been practically no strikes to interrupt this condition. The only trouble worthy of mention is the strike at the Decatur Coal Company's mine, at Niantic, Macon county. This mine was idle for nine months, on account of the miners insisting that it become a union mine, with all the conditions that go with such a mine. The Coal Company insisted that it was impossible to make a profit out of the mine under the then existing conditions, and it would be impossible to continue operating the mine under the terms demanded by the union, as it very materially increased the cost of production. After nine months' idleness the mine resumed work as a machine mine, the company in the mean time having put in an electric plant and installed a number of Jeffrey mining machines. As a result of the prolonged strike at Niantic the tonnage of Macon county will be nearly one-third less this year than last—quite a noticeable fact when compared with all the other counties comprising the Fourth District, which shows a considerably increased tonnage over last year. That the mines of this district are in a much safer and better condition, is evidenced by the small number of fatalities this year compared with the preceding year, notwithstanding there was 785,678 more tons of coal produced this year than last. This year the district produced 3,357,737 tons of coal, being 305,249 tons of coal mined for each life lost, and compares favorably with the older mining countries of the world.

In all the larger mines of this district hand mining is being gradually superseded by machines, as evidenced by the increase in the number of machines and the tonnage cut by them. The inefficient and antiquated method of ventilating mines with a furnace is being rapidly displaced by the more improved mechanical method—that of a fan. There have been more fans placed in the mines in this district during the past year than was ever put up in the same length of time since the mine inspection service was inaugurated. Quite a number of small mines that are operated exclusively for local trade have displaced the old furnace with a steam fan, which greatly improves the ventilation of such mines.

*Mine Fires.*—Early in the morning of August 5, 1898, fire was discovered in the boiler room of the Westville Coal Company's mine, Westville. Such rapid progress had been made by the fire before being discovered that it was an utter impossibility to save the building, which served the double purpose of a boiler room and an engine room. The mine being operated exclusively by electric machines, the fire destroyed the large dynamo located in the engine room. Fortunately the fire did no damage to the hoisting engine and boilers. After a period of thirty-eight days a new brick engine and boiler room had