

McLEAN COUNTY.

THE McLEAN COUNTY COAL Co.

This is a shaft located at Bloomington, at the junction of the C. & A. and I. B. & W. railroads. This mine having received such favorable mention by my predecessor, with such full description of the workings, I will simply state by way of endorsement that I found every thing in connection with it all that could be desired. The managers spare nothing that will tend to make it safer and healthier. The ventilation, while good, will still be improved by a split in the air current, which was nearly completed on my last visit, May 26. In addition to this the proprietors are preparing to move the hauling engines below to the other side of the shaft, where the heat arising from the machinery can be utilized in the upcast, instead of heating the air at the intake, as is now the case. The company realizing that the upper seam is not as saleable as the lower, owing to its hardness which necessitates considerable labor in breaking it up for steam use, have erected a steam breaker to crush the coal to four different sizes, the largest of them being four and one-half inches. The various sizes are conveyed by chutes leading from the revolving screen to bins capable of holding 500 tons of prepared coal, which are so arranged that wagons can be quickly loaded. The breaker is worked by a 15 inch belt, connecting with the belt pulley on the engine. The whole plant is incased in a building 40 feet high, 75 feet long and 18 feet wide.

W. W. Stephenson, Sup't; Thos. Radford, Mine Manager.

MENARD COUNTY.

In this county there have been 7 mines in operation in the past year, and they have produced 139 120 tons of coal, from No. 5 seam, which averages 5 feet 6 inches in thickness.

THE PETERSBURG COAL Co.

This company has been operating two shafts. No. 1, or the north shaft, is located two miles northeast of Petersburg, on the C. & A. R. R., and is 65 feet deep. The workings of this mine are very extended, having been in operation fifteen years, and have been carried on for the most part by double entries, but the company is now driving single entries with brattice cloth for conducting the air. The entries are driven 9 feet wide and are about 100 yards apart, running parallel, and are headed off, say, every 200 yards, by an entry at right angles connecting them. This mine is very difficult to work, from having so many "horsebacks" and a poor roof, necessitating an unusual amount of heavy timber to keep the hauling roads safe. The air was split and was very poor on the west, but it has since been improved. The split on the north was very good, as the men received the air direct from the escape shaft on its way

to the furnace, at the bottom of the shaft. The engine house at this mine was burned down February 14, but was rebuilt and in operation again March 15.

D. Stedder, Superintendent and Mine Manager.

No. 2 OR JUNCTION SHAFT.

The buildings at this shaft were burned down on the night of April 27. The company had just completed several improvements, among them being 20 feet of new curbing at the top of the shaft. The new curbing being dry was readily consumed by the fire, allowing the shaft to cave in. It was first thought that the fire originated at the furnace below, but on going down the escape shaft to the furnace, nothing was found to confirm the belief. The furnace is located 60 feet from the shaft bottom, with 20 feet of brick arch extending from the furnace towards the air chamber. The mine was worked on the same principal as the foregoing, but was in better condition, owing to its being a newer mine. No effort has been made to rebuild.

THE ATHENS COAL Co.

This company is operating a shaft 225 feet deep, at Athens, on the Wabash R. R. Ventilation in excess of the requirements of the law is maintained by a furnace at the bottom of the shaft. Doors have been placed on the entries instead of screens, and an effort has been made to turn the air around the working faces by the use of screens at the mouth of the rooms. The escape shaft being small and wet is now being enlarged and made dry. I required more effective safety catches to be put on the cages, which were ordered, and are doubtless now in use.

James Eddy, Superintendent.

James Pierson, Mine Manager.

THE SOUTH VALLEY COAL Co.

This shaft is located at the southern extremity of Petersburg, on the line of the Wabash R. R., and is 68 feet deep. Only 29 men were employed in winter and 6 in summer, there being only two entries in progress. These were safe and well ventilated by a furnace at the top of the escape shaft, which is small and wet. The company was notified to enlarge it and overhaul the ladders.

J. C. Cabanis, Superintendent.

Thomas Ackford, Mine Manager.

SWEET WATER MINE.

This is a local supply shaft 170 feet deep, located at Sweet Water, three miles south of Greenview, and everything about it is in splendid order.

Wm. Parker, Proprietor and Manager.