

Coal production by counties in the First district, with increase or decrease in each, for the years ending June 30, 1897 and 1898.

Counties.	Total Output of all Grades of Coal in Tons.		Increase.	Decrease.
	1897.	1898.		
Grundy	1,077,576	796,249	281,327
Kankakee	180,683	84,632	96,051
LaSalle	1,508,833	1,165,490	343,343
Livingston	145,206	122,087	23,119
Will	25,682	40,904	15,222
Total	2,937,980	2,209,362	15,222	743,840
Decrease				743,840
Increase				15,222
Net decrease				728,618

This decrease is due to the continuous strike of five and a half months duration during the first part of the year. The gain in Will county is due to the fact that the miners in this county continued at work nearly full time during the strike.

New Mines.—LaSalle county.—The Piny Coal Co. of Streator, located on the Benekindorf farm, two miles north of Streator, has sunk a new shaft about 400 feet south of the old one, and will use the old one for an air shaft.

S. A. Muntz & Sons have opened a new mine in South Streator, which is intended to supply local trade only.

Love & Sons have opened a new mine two and one half miles north of Wilsman. The shaft is 73 feet deep; the machinery at this time is light and intended for local trade only.

James Plauger, Daniel Verzain and Taylor & Jennings have opened new mines near Ottawa.

Livingston county.—C. G. Darm has opened a new mine near Streator.

A. M. Barackman, of Streator, has opened a new mine at Coalville.

Edgar Hamilton has opened a new mine at Coalville.

Kimes' Coöperative Coal Co. has opened a new mine near Coalville.

Abandoned Mines.—LaSalle county.—William Thomas & Co. have abandoned their mine one mile northwest of Streator, at the Eagle Clay Works.

Price & Jones have abandoned their mine on Prairie Creek, near Streator.

Sowerby Bros. have abandoned their mine, one mile north of Streator, and opened a new one a quarter of a mile south of the old one.

Livingston county.—John Caswell has abandoned his mine at Coalville. Jesse Massy & Son have abandoned their mine at South Streator.

Grundy county.—The Wilmington Star Coal Co. has abandoned its No. 3 mine at Coal City. Harry Kay has abandoned his mine near Morris, and opened a new one about four miles north of Morris.

Grundy county.—Thomas Stott & Son have abandoned their mine near Morris.

Will county.—Robert Crighton has abandoned his mine at Braidwood.

Fires.—On September 22, 1897, the top works of the Carbon Hill mine No. 1, belonging to the Star Coal Co., were consumed by fire. The fire occurred during the strike; its origin is not known, but it is thought to have been incendiary.

Floods.—The mines of the following proprietors were flooded with water during the heavy rainfalls in March, 1898, at Streator, in LaSalle county: The A. V. Swarthout Coal Co., W. D. Thorn, Joseph Fairbairn and Edward Dawson. In Livingston county: Joseph Kilburn, Oscar Kimes, Thos. Edwards, C. G. Darm, Burrell & Reese and J. Massy & Son.

Improvements.—William Maltby, of Braidwood, has put in a shaker screen and has also erected an eight-foot fan, which has greatly improved the ventilation.

The Big 4 Wilmington Coal Co. has put in a shaker screen of its own design, which is working very successfully.

The LaSalle County Carbon Coal Co. has put in at its LaSalle mine a shaker screen and erected an elevator and storage hopper for handling screenings, of one hundred tons capacity.

The C., W. & V. Coal Co., at Streator, has put in shaker screens at its mines Nos. 1 and 2; also at its "R" shaft at Braidwood, all of which are working very successfully.

The Pontiac Coal Co. has purchased the mine formerly owned by Richard Evans & Sons, at Pontiac, Livingston county. This company has completed the air and escape shaft, which has put the ventilation of the mine in good order, and has increased the safety of the miners and other employes in the mine.

New Company.—A company of miners has been engaged for six months in sinking a shaft at Forrest, Livingston county. The shaft was sunk to the depth of 72 feet, when it was abandoned, owing to the difficult nature of the ground and the immense quantity of water encountered. The timbers were too light for the depth of the shaft, which caused a collapse and the shaft was lost.

The relations between the operators and miners have been harmonious since the strike; no stoppage of any kind has occurred in this district, except at a few mines where new scales were put in, and this was amicably adjusted. The prospect of the coal trade in this district for the coming year is very flattering for a large output, as all the mines are working nearly full time at this date.

Fatal Accidents.—December 21, 1897, Frank Brazina, a miner, came to his death by an explosion of gas in the Star Coal Company's mine at Spring Hill, LaSalle county. He had just gone in that morning to look for a place, but did not find one to suit him. W. J. Brown, mine manager, told him to go home and come back the next morning and he would have a place ready for him; but instead of going on top, he went to the south side into an old abandoned entry, through a door with a danger signal on it, and over falls and through water two feet deep, with a naked light, when an explosion of gas occurred, killing him instantly. Deceased was 35 years of age and single.