

The following shafts have been retimbered during the last year: The Millstadt shaft, the Skellet Coal Company's shaft, the Lumaghi Coal Company's shaft.

The Hydraulic Pressed Brick Company has commenced mining coal at their shaft. They have hoisted about 5,000 tons. Their return came too late to be placed on the tabulated report. This company has organized a coal company known as the Independent Coal Company, Collinsville. The shaft is located near Cantine.

Escapement shafts are in progress as follows: At the mine of the Trenton L. & P. Coal Company, Trenton. The Kinmundy Coal Company's escapement shaft is down 200 feet. The contract is let to Frank Seymour to put it down. The progress at the Salem mine is slow, but they are working at it with a small force.

I notice in the last year's report of the Sixth district that a change had been made with regard to the geological number of the seams at the Troy, Brookside, Trenton, Bennett and Darrow mines. In the opinion of my predecessor, Mr. Cumming, the seams at all these places present the same characteristics and should all be reported as the No. 7 seam, and not the No. 6, as they have been generally considered. Upon examination of the fossils, and of the general character of the formation at these points, I am disposed to agree with Mr. Cumming, and have consequently designated the seams at the mines named as No. 7.

*Fatal Accidents.*—July 13, 1897, at the Bennett mine near Lebanon, belonging to the Lebanon Coal and Machine Association, Peter Hoppen, a loader, dropped dead while at work. He was loading a car with coal. The entry in which the rooms were located where he had worked that morning was driven 400 feet ahead of the air. Four rooms and a cross cut were being worked inside of the last cross cut. The rooms were all new and were just being widened out. They were mined by machines and the blasting was done about 4 o'clock in the morning by the night shift, about four shots to each room. The only ventilation available while mining the rooms was the exhaust from the machines; but as the compressor stopped when the night shift quit work, there was no provision made for removing the obnoxious gases generated by the explosion of powder used for shooting the coal. As the place was insufficiently ventilated when the work started at 7 o'clock in the morning, the air could not possibly be fit for respiration. Mr. Hoppen complained to his partner of his head, and assigned the condition of the air as being the cause. He had worked in the first room inside of the last cross cut all the morning up to 11:30 a. m., and had just moved into the next room with his partner, 80 feet further in the entry, where he had worked about ten minutes. He suddenly fell over backwards. His partner immediately gave the alarm and called for help, which was prompt in responding, and he was carried back to the air course, where every effort was made to revive him, but he expired in a few minutes. The verdict of the coroner's jury was that death resulted from heart disease; this was verified by the circuit court in a suit for damages. He was 48 years old and leaves a widow and five children.

August 25, 1897, at the escapement shaft of the Sandoval mine, Fred Heaver was hoisted up to the pulley and precipitated down the shaft, which was 600 feet deep, and was instantly killed. The fireman or night watchman, W. H. Steiner, was to let him down to the pump, which needed some attention. Instead of letting him down he hoisted him up by mistake, with the above result. Deceased was 60 years of age and leaves a widow and one child.

October 9, 1897, Peter Yagge, a miner in the Turkey Hill or Moser mine, was instantly killed by a premature shot in the mine. His age was 55 years and he leaves a widow and six children.

November 13, 1897, Fred Felax, a loader in the Odin coal mine, was seriously injured by falling coal and died from the effects of it that same evening. He leaves a widow and four children. He was 48 years of age.

November 20, 1897, Richard Jones, a machine helper in the Bennett mine, near Lebanon, had his hips and back seriously injured by falling coal in the mine. He died four hours afterward from the effects of the injury. His age was 28 years, and he was unmarried.

January 11, 1898, Louis Saler, a loader, was killed in the Centralia Mining and Manufacturing Company's mine. After loading his coal it is supposed that he started to cut down a piece of top coal. Over this piece of coal there was a large piece of sulphur rock. It was known to be dangerous. While in the act of cutting the coal the weight of the above rock broke the coal suddenly, which fell upon him, causing instant death.

January 26, 1898, Chas. Denman, a driver, 26 years of age, married only a few months prior to his death, was killed by falling down the shaft of the Odin Coal Company, which is 714 feet deep. He had been working on the night shift. After his work was done, which was between 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning, he and another workman by the name of Walter Baugh were being hoisted out of the mine. Walter says that they had a light when the cage started, but that it went out while they were being hoisted. As it was still dark on top, they were unable to see when they got to the place where it was customary to let them off, which was the lower landing. The engineer said he must have had the cage eight or ten feet above the said landing when Charles Denham stepped off of the cage. The force of his fall, stepping from such a height above the landing, must have caused him to stumble and fall back into the shaft.

February 4, 1898, J. C. Sanderson, a loader in the Smithboro Coal Company's mine, met his death while in the act of loading a car with coal at the face of the main entry, in the top seam. A large piece of rock gave way, falling on him, from the effects of which he died shortly afterward. He was 30 years old and leaves a widow and two children.

Respectfully submitted,

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CENTRALIA.

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