

shaft operating seam No. 7, but the company decided to sink to seam No. 2 for the purpose of mining the fire clay under the coal seam, which is of a superior quality. In sinking they passed through a seam of coal of good quality; this seam is 3 feet and 7 inches thick and was found at a depth of 130 feet from the surface. It is their intention to mine the coal of this seam for the purpose of burning the clay. The tipples and buildings are of a substantial character, and their engines are double hoisting engines, 10x12 geared.

Sylvester Kimes has sunk a new shaft at Coalville on land leased from Richard Evans; it is intended to supply local trade.

William Burrell has sunk a new escape shaft at his mine south of Streator. This has made a great improvement in the ventilation of the mine.

Richard Evans & Sons, of Pontiac, began sinking their escape shaft in the fore part of June. It is now nearing completion. This will enable the ventilation of this mine to be put in proper order.

*Improvements.*—The LaSalle County Carbon Coal Co. has begun the system of splitting the air current and is putting in several overcasts in their Union mine, and when completed will be a great improvement on the system of ventilation.

The Acme Coal Company, of Streator, has put in a double Murphy fan 4 feet in diameter. It has improved the ventilation of their mine.

*Infractions of the Law.*—The Prairie Creek Coal Company, Streator, was found to be operating their Otter Creek mines without having a duly qualified manager, but after a good deal of correspondence and several personal interviews, they decided to comply with the law.

The Standard Oil Company, of Seneca, was found to be operating their mine at Seneca without a certified mine manager and a night shift engineer under 18 years of age. After being notified they complied with the law in both cases.

*Abandoned Mines.*—The mine operated by Alex Begrun & Sons at Pleasant Hill has been abandoned. Owing to it being opened into other old mines, excessive rains filled the workings with water.

The C. W. & V. Coal Company has abandoned their No. 3 mine south of Streator.

John Marshall has again abandoned his mine owing to water coming in from other mines.

Will County—The C. W. & V. Coal Co. has abandoned their Q. shaft at Braidwood owing to the great expense incurred in timbering and pumping water, this being a constant source of trouble and expense.

*Labor Troubles.*—On May 18 the miners employed at the Barrackman Coal Company's mine went out on a strike because the company refused to credit the miners with the full weight of their pit cars. When a car weighed, say 48 pounds over the hundred pounds the odd pounds were not given to the miner. After the miners were idle two weeks the company agreed to credit them with the weight of all coal passing over the screens.

*Accidents.*—Eighteen fatal accidents occurred last year. After a careful investigation of the causes of such accidents I find that eleven of them were caused by falling rock and three by falling coal, two caught by a cage, one by a running

belt and one by a blast blowing through a pillar; this accident was due to a want of knowledge on the part of the victim of the point in the pillar where the blast was placed, but could have been prevented if a more careful inquiry had been made before the blast was fired. The accident from the running belt was not seen by any person and it was supposed the man had attempted to kick the belt off the pulley with his foot.

The other sixteen accidents were caused by carelessness on the part of some of the victims and a lack of knowledge on the part of the others.

In making inspections of the various mines in the first inspection district I have found men working under dangerous rocks, and, in calling their attention to this, they felt hurt at having their judgment of such matters called in question. On different occasions, in going through the long wall mines of the district, I have found men cutting the brushing on their road without having any props under it to secure it while they were cutting and in a number of instances have stopped and put in timber to secure the rock. Some have said that the reason they failed to do this was that such props were in the way of getting the coal out on the road and this is often the case, but I am glad to say that after explaining the danger and the risk incurred in following this practice, the majority of the English speaking miners put props in the center of their road when cutting their brushing, but a large number of them who do not understand what is said to them still run great risks in this respect, and especially when the mine has been idle for some days, their working place will be generally in bad order. The roof settles down in front of the coal and in some instances caves altogether. When this is the case it would require most of the day to secure the roof, but in their anxiety to load all the coal they can, in case they do not work the following day, it very often happens that the roof is only secured in a temporary way, resulting in a large number of fatal accidents.

*Fatal Accidents.*—On July 2, 1895, at the Big Four Coal Company's No. 2 mine, Coal City, Patrick Greening, a miner, aged 49 years, was instantly killed by a fall of coal in his room. The coal was mined under and sprags were set in front of it upon which the coal was resting. A prop was set about fifteen inches in front of the coal between the sprags. He proceeded to take down the coal by knocking out the first sprag, but the coal did not come down, so he reached past the prop and knocked out another sprag, upon which the coal fell suddenly, catching him between the coal and the prop, breaking his neck. He died instantly. Deceased left four children and a widow.

July 16 Dominico Ariano, a miner, 24 years of age, was instantly killed by a fall of rock at the face of his room. The cause of the accident was evidently due to incompetency or carelessness. On examination I found the nature of the roof to be what we call good, but that the props supporting the same were entirely too far apart; where the rock fell they were nearly nine feet apart, allowing the rock an opportunity to break, which it did, throwing one prop between. The rock that fell on him would weigh over a ton; his head was crushed on a sulphur that was in the gob. He was a single man and leaves no one dependent in this country.