

MINE FIRE.

January 16, 1905. Shortly after noon, a fire broke out in mine No. 1 of the Decatur Coal Co., Decatur, Macon county, which resulted in the death of six men as follows: August Yagusch, miner aged 51 years; Charles Lachinski, driver, aged 35 years; Emil Knorr, miner aged 17 years; William Fagan, driver, aged 20 years; William Gollan, miner, aged 50 years; Paul Gollan, miner, aged 17 years; and endangering the lives of seven others, namely, John Dunn, Martin Cullen, Fred Knorr, William Kastner, Thomas Fagan, John Pride and August Rex, all of whom were cut off from escape by the fire; all of the other men working in the mine at the time, about sixty, escaped safely out of the workings.

The fire was discovered in the first north entry in the stable used to feed the mules, the stable being located about 2,100 feet from the bottom of the hoisting shaft. The mule feeder, Mr. Williams, went into that part of the mine about 1:30 o'clock P. M., and finding the fire attempted to extinguish it, but failing to do so, gave the alarm: Thomas Clark, mine manager, came to Williams' assistance and realizing the danger he at once sent runners around the mine to warn the men, and notify them to get out as soon as possible; all of the men escaped excepting those already named. On the first discovery of the fire, mine manager Clark also sent an alarm to the city fire department, which responded promptly, but, owing to the location of the fire so far underground, considerable time was consumed in preparing to get to the fire. A line of hose was connected to the nearest hydrant and carried to the shaft, a distance of seven hundred feet, and six hundred feet down the shaft, then inside twenty-one hundred feet to the fire, a total distance of thirty-four hundred feet. After several breaks in the hose, from the pressure due to the depth of the shaft in addition to the pressure from the pumps, the water was thrown on to the fire, and bringing the flames practically under control about six o'clock P. M. At this time John Dunn, Martin Cullen, Fred Knorr, William Kastner and Thomas Fagan, who were among the missing, came out of the first east entry and reported that the body of Lachinski was lying a few feet back in the entry, or about 50 feet from the fire; the body was at once secured and removed to the surface. About three o'clock the next morning John Pride another of the missing men came out at the main east entry and reported that August Rex was in room No. 43 on the first south entry, off of the first east and that he was still alive; a rescuing party went to the place indicated and brought Rex out, who was in a very bad condition, but was finally resuscitated and taken to the hospital. It is supposed that he will fully recover.

The bodies of William Gollan and Emil Knorr were found at the same place where Rex was found. This point is about twenty-seven hundred feet from the fire; search was then made for the other missing men, and the body of August Yagusch was found on the first east entry, about nineteen hundred feet from the fire; the bodies of William Fagan and Paul Gollan were not discovered until about 10:00 o'clock a. m., January 17, for the reason that both men had gotten off of the open road and into the third east entry which had been abandoned; when these bodies were found, they were only about two hundred and fifty feet from where the fire was first located. William Crankshaw was in the mine at this time and assisted in the recovery of these two bodies.

William Fagan and Charles Lachinski were drivers and had been sent to warn the men, as they were both familiar with the mine, they would no doubt have gotten out safely if they had followed the face of the workings, but from the location of their bodies when found, they evidently had tried to get out on the roads on which they hauled coal, the one on the first north entry and the other on the first east were both cut off by the fire, as it was located at the intersection of these two entries.

The fire was undoubtedly caused by sparks from a pipe or a partially consumed cigarette, probably the latter, as the drivers were said to be addicted to the use of cigarettes. The damage to the mine is only trifling, consisting of the burning of the timbers in the stables and six mules which were suffocated by the smoke.

Since this report was submitted the following account, taken from the "Labor World," published at Decatur, in its issue of Oct. 27, 1905, gives in detail the settlements made by the company in consequence of the foregoing deaths.

"All of the cases against the Decatur Coal Company, which resulted from the disaster in the mine last winter, Jan. 16, 1905, have been settled. Five cases were settled for \$13,500. The Fagan case was settled through the administrator appointed by the county court a few days since, \$2,500 being paid the family. The father of Fagan was for many years pit boss in the mine and he is now stricken and helpless and more was given the Fagan family than the other families, where an unmarried man was killed.

Several days ago the case for damages for the death of Emil Knorr was tried. The jury disagreed as to the amount of damages, but it was known that all were in favor of giving damages.

Wednesday the cases of Bertha Lachiniski, as administratrix of the estate of Charles Lachiniski, came up. The trial was started but before it was finished a compromise was reached in this, and in all other cases. In each judgment was entered formerly in court and the jury was instructed to return a verdict which was done in each case. The amounts paid were as follows:

For the death of Charles Lachiniski, \$3,000; for the death of William Gollan, \$3,000; for the death of Paul Gollan, \$2,000; for the death of Emil Knorr, \$2,000; for the death of August Yagusch, \$3,000. In the cases where the men were married, \$3,000, and the families of the unmarried men were given \$2,000. The costs were also paid by the coal company and this made a total of \$13,500, together with the \$2,500 paid the Fagan family, \$16,000 all told."

FATAL ACCIDENTS.

July 9, 1904, Anton Daniealus, miner, aged 31 years, married, employed in the Kellyville Coal Co's. mine No. 4, Westville, Vermilion county, was fatally injured by a fall of rock; he was injured about 8 o'clock in the morning and died three hours afterwards. He leaves a widow and one child.

July 23, 1904, Woodford F. Pierce, a miner, aged 50 years, married, employed in the Kellyville Coal Co's. mine No. 4, Westville, Vermilion county, was fatally injured by a fall of rock about 7:30 a. m. He died from the injuries received about 1 o'clock p. m. the same day. He leaves a widow and two children.

August 11, 1904, Louis Rossini, miner, aged 47 years, married, employed in the Westville Coal Co's. mine No. 1, South Westville, Vermilion county, was instantly killed by a fall of rock, which came from a coal slip. The room, in which he was working, is No. 19, off of the 10th northwest entry and was in good condition, otherwise, and was well timbered. He leaves a widow and two children.

August 22, 1904, Anton Yaranska, miner, aged 27 years, single, employed in the Kellyville Coal Co's. Himrod mine, was fatally injured by a fall of rock. The deceased, who had driven his room into another in the opposite direction, was engaged in mining the coal out between the two rooms, when a large piece of rock fell on him with the result as stated. He died about ten hours after the accident.

September 17, 1904, William Bavries, miner, aged 40 years, married, employed in mine No. 3 of the Kellyville Coal Co., Westville, Vermilion county, was instantly killed by a fall of rock. The deceased and his partner had fired two shots in their room about 3 o'clock p. m. the above date; after the shots had exploded, Bavries went back to the face of the room to see the result of the shots, when a large piece of rock fell on him with the result stated.

September 23, 1904, Michael Alunis, miner, aged 26 years, single, employed in the Kellyville Coal Co's. mine No. 3, Westville, Vermilion county, was instantly killed by a fall of rock about 10:30 a. m. of the above date.

October 3, 1904, Anton Portsus, miner, aged 35 years, married, employed in the Kellyville Coal Co's mine No. 2, Kellyville, Vermilion county, was injured by a falling rock from the effects of which he died Feb. 20, 1905. He leaves a widow and one child.