

The company now has twenty-five dwelling houses and a hotel erected, and the Hillsboro Building and Loan Company is building twenty-five more houses. The location of the shaft is very good, as little grading for yard work will be required. The houses for the men and families are located where there is a very fine view of the surrounding country and a good location for a town.

The Peabody Mining Co. has secured a large tract of coal land near Nokomis, Montgomery county, on the lines of the C. C. C. & St. L. and Frisco roads, and is now sinking a shaft; the company expects to reach the coal seam eight and one-half feet thick at 650 feet in depth from the surface.

**The Trutter Coal Co., Springfield, Sangamon county, is sinking a new shaft on the line of the B. & O. R. R., four miles west of Springfield. The main shaft is now down to the coal, 174 feet, the coal seam is about six feet thick.**

The Mechanicsburg Coal Co., Mechanicsburg, Sangamon county, is sinking a new shaft one and one-half miles from that town on the line of the Illinois Traction Co.'s road.

Several new local mines have been opened out and others have been abandoned during the year.

#### FIRES AT MINES.

Dec. 10, 1904, the tower, locomotive chutes and outbuildings of the Woodside Coal Co., Springfield, were destroyed by fire, the origin of the fire is supposed to have been caused by sparks from passing locomotives. Twenty-eight mules were suffocated. The fire occurred at night; some twelve or fourteen men were working in the mine, but got out safely by the escapeway. Every thing has been rebuilt and the mine commenced work again Jan. 18, 1905.

Dec. 19, 1904, the top works at the Wm. H. Bates mine at Winchester, Scott county, were destroyed by fire. Engine, boiler house, blacksmith shop, wagon scale, shed and locomotive chutes were all destroyed. The fan-house was untouched; all of the mules were saved, being hoisted out of the escape shaft by the men; fortunately there were no men at work in the mine when the fire broke out. This fire was also said to have originated from sparks from passing locomotives. All of the buildings destroyed have been rebuilt and the mine is now at work.

#### EXPLOSION IN MINES.

November 11, 1904, at 1:15 a. m., an explosion occurred in the Peabody Mining Co.'s mine at Sherman, Sangamon county, because of which James McGee and Anton Maruscha lost their lives. I visited the mine the next day, November 12, in company with James Smith, county inspector of Sangamon county. The following is a detailed report of our inspection, accompanied by a map showing where the explosion took place, the location of the various exploded powder kegs which had been ignited by the blast, also other points.

The explosion occurred in the first north entry off the main east entry on the east side of the mine; in this latter entry Anton Maruscha, one of the men killed, was working. The entry had been worked in a distance of 311 feet from the main east entry, the face of the entry was 70 feet from the last open cross-cut, and work had been commenced to drive the next cross-cut through at 60 feet.

Three shots had been prepared and fired in the face; a top hole, and a bottom hole directly underneath, also a top hole at right angles to the other holes in the cross-cut; the two holes in the entry had been drilled in a line with the left rib of the entry, and both had been placed in the solid, with no chance whatever to bring down the coal; there was also a roll in the roof, running diagonally across the face of the entry for four feet back from the face, that still further prevented the shots from dislodging the coal. The bottom hole it was found, had blown off part of the heel of the shot, but left 11 inches of the remaining hole; the top hole had blown its tamping, also about six inches was blown off the mouth of the hole, and twenty-seven inches remained dead. The hole in the