

ployes, 68.41 per cent. were employed inside, and 31.59 per cent. outside. Of the 496 fatal accidents inside the mines, about 75 per cent. occurred among the miners and miners' laborers. These two classes of employes are the heaviest sufferers in the way of fatalities. A reference to the accident tables will give more complete details.

Every year when the accidents that occur in and about the coal mines are analyzed, it is found that the responsibility rests to a great extent with the victims themselves. Of the 595 lives lost during the past year in and about the anthracite mines, 282, or 47.39 per cent., were lost through the negligence of the victims, 56, or 9.41 per cent., through the negligence of other persons. In the case of 53, or 8.91 per cent. of the accidents, the responsibility cannot be determined, and the remaining 204, or 34.29 per cent., are classed as unavoidable. These figures are truly a sad commentary on the supervision and carefulness of the persons most interested—the operators, superintendents, foremen and miners.

---

#### Accident at Williamstown Colliery, of the Summit Branch Mining Company

On the 25th of May an accident unusual in character and very severe in its results, occurred in the Williamstown tunnel. An investigation was made by Inspectors M. J. Brennan and Benjamin L. Evans, in the absence of Inspector Martin Kelly, who was sick at the time. The report of the investigation is as follows:

Hon. James E. Roderick, Chief of Department of Mines:

Dear Sir: We, the undersigned inspectors, having investigated the accident that caused the death of Michael Golden, mine foreman, Enoch Morgan, miner, Albert Nau, engineer, George Radle, machinist, Joseph Punch, laborer, John Kenney, miner, Burt James, miner, Torpedas Koppenhaver, outside laborer, Aaron Koppenhaver, outside laborer, and Henry V. Frederick, outside laborer, at Williamstown colliery, Summit Branch Mining Company, May 25, 1904, beg to submit the following report:

About 3:00 P. M., May 25, the No. 1 shaft locomotive on Bear Valley side ran into north end of tunnel with a trip of ten or twelve loaded cars, a distance of about 150 feet, to pass the switch in order to run trip to Bear Valley slope, east turnout, where all loaded cars are placed to make up trip for main line engine. While this engine was shifting a mine car loaded with plank, it jumped the track and dropped a distance of two or three feet to track below. About this time there were some men waiting for an accommodation car which the company had been in the habit of furnishing them for transportation to the south end of the tunnel, on the line of route to their

homes. Thinking that it would be some time before the car would be placed upon the track and would consequently be detained, they decided to walk through the tunnel. When they reached No. 7 or Skidmore vein, a point about 200 feet from the north end of the tunnel, they began to feel the effects of the gas and commenced to stagger, some of them falling to the tunnel floor. About this time the main line engine came close up to them from the south or Williamstown end of tunnel, with empty trip and miners aboard. They received a signal to stop. In an instant after stopping his engine the engineer and conductor became unconscious.

The men belonging to the crowd that were not overcome by the fumes, together with the men who arrived from south end of tunnel on empty trip, gathered together all the sick and unconscious persons and put them on board of the trip. A miner by the name of Williams jumped in the engine cab, threw the throttle wide open and ran the trip out through the north end of tunnel. After the trip arrived at the north end of tunnel, Walter Lewis, one of the men who had been picked up and placed upon the engine with others, started back into tunnel and came through to south or Williamstown end and gave the alarm. About the same time a telephone message had been received from the north or Bear Valley end warning them of the trouble in the tunnel. Michael Golden, general inside foreman, Thomas Bond, inside foreman, with a number of men following, responded to the call for help and went to the rescue, immediately following empty trip from southern or Williamstown end to north end of tunnel, and when they got to a point 1,400 feet south of north end of the tunnel Mr. Golden and Mr. Bond fell unconscious. Mr. Bond rallied sufficiently to help himself, but Mr. Golden died.

About this point in the tunnel is where the greater number of the suffocated men was discovered. It would appear to us, after making a thorough inquiry into the cause of the accident, that the first cause of trouble was that some of the miners coming from north end to Williamstown, rode out on outgoing trip and one or two of them being overcome by the fumes from the locomotive fell from the trip, causing commotion among the remainder, who in turn spread the alarm which caused the rescuers to run in haste without taking any precaution on their part.

In our opinion, if the mine foreman had taken the situation in at a glance and realized the possible consequences, he would or could have placed a temporary obstruction, such as canvas curtain, at south end of tunnel, and compelled the two fans to draw their air from north end of tunnel, and immediately relieved the situation and prevented the unnecessary loss of life. But in the excitement of the moment and his anxiety to relieve the sufferers, he underestimated the danger that he had to contend with. We feel satisfied that the victims were suffocated by coal gas from the locomotive, the accumulation of which at this particular time was due to high temperature on the surface, the effect of which caused the air to reverse, nullifying the action of the fan.

M. J. BRENNAN,

Inspector, Twelfth District.

BENJAMIN I. EVANS,

Inspector, Fourteenth District.

# COAL FATAL

1904 0004

Report of an Asphixiation at the Williamstown  
Colliery Coal Mine in Williamstown, Pennsylvania  
May 25, 1904 - 10 Killed

May 25, 1904; Williamstown Colliery, Summit Branch Mining Company,  
Williamstown, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania; 10 Killed

(From Reports of the Inspectors of Coal Mines of the Anthracite  
Coal Regions of Pennsylvania, 1904, p. ix)

About 3:00 p.m., on May 25, 1904, an unusual accident occurred in the Williamstown tunnel. While a steam locomotive was shifting a mine car loaded with plank, the loaded car jumped the track. About this time there were some men waiting for an accommodation car which the company had been in the habit of providing them for transportation to the end of the tunnel on the line of route to their homes. Thinking that it would be some time before the car would be placed on the track, they decided to walk through the tunnel. At a point of about 200 feet from the end of the tunnel ten men were suffocated by fumes from the steam driven (coal fired) locomotive.

MSHA LIBRARY  
P. O. BOX 25367  
DENVER, CO 80225