

THE ATWATER CALAMITY.

Burning of the Slope of the Atwater Coal Company—Ten Persons Supposed to Have Suffocated—Sad Fourth of July—Origin of the Fire.

[Special Correspondence Cleveland LEADER.]

LIMAVILLE, STARK COUNTY, July 4.

Yesterday afternoon, about 1:30 P. M., intelligence reached us that the slope of the aforesaid company, situated in Atwater township, and two and a half miles northeast of this place, was on fire and ten men in the mine. The excitement at once became very great—the citizens dropped everything and rushed with might and main to the place of danger, where a terrible scene was presented to their gaze. The fire, which by this time had gained considerable headway, was burning and raging furiously, and notwithstanding everything was done that human skill could devise to arrest its progress, yet all efforts to extinguish or smother it proved futile. The miners, being apprized of their situation, at once rushed for the mouth of the slope; only a few, however, made good their escape; the remainder as above stated, are supposed to have suffocated. Finding that it was impossible to effect an entrance through the mouth of the slope, it was decided to drill a hole down at the back part of the mine, in order that if possible any of the men were alive, it would at least afford them some relief. The work was commenced and vigorously executed, and by two o'clock this morning it was completed. No indications of life were perceptible at the completion of this drill hole, and it was at once decided upon to sink a shaft five feet square, which has been worked without cessation ever since. It is but justice to say that the citizens of this surrounding community acquitted themselves in the most favorable manner, for the commendable zeal and unabated energy manifested on this solemn occasion.

This morning the Phoenix Fire Company from Ravenna came down, and after getting into position played on the fire for some time without apparently accomplishing much good, but finally succeeded in nearly putting it out. These men, too, worked very hard and well deserved the thanks of the community as well as the company for their untiring efforts in extinguishing the fire and for the active part taken in helping to remove the dead bodies.

The origin of the fire, it seems, was from a stove or furnace used at the bottom of the slope for the purpose of removing the foul air, and by some means unknown to any one, the timbers took fire, from which we have these sad results. The company is severely censured for neglecting to sink a shaft through which the miners could retreat in case of an emergency. It will also be a heavy financial loss to the company, and it is feared will have a tendency to intimidate them in extending and enlarging this new enterprise, as anticipated. The train on the Branch Road is running almost constantly backwards and forwards carrying passengers gratuitously, which is quite an accommodation to the public. Mr. W. C. Magee, an operator in the employ of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad, has placed an instrument at the station, which makes it convenient to transmit messages to different parts of the country. This, indeed, has been a sorrowful Fourth of July to the people of this part of the country, and altogether one of the greatest calamities that ever occurred in our midst.

Thousands of people are at the scene, and the greatest excitement prevails. John Hutchins, Esq., President of the company, is on the ground doing all he can to expedite the work.

LATER.—The fire has almost ceased. Seven bodies have already been brought out which are so badly burned and charred as scarcely to bear recognition. Two men and a boy are still in the mine. No hopes are entertained, that they will be rescued alive.