

MINING MORTALITY.

**The Diamond Mine, at Braidwood, Ill.,
Flooded,—Seventy-five Lives Lost.**

BRAIDWOOD, Ill., Feb. 17.—The tragedy in the Diamond mine yesterday was as unique as it was devastating. A section of prairie land, forty by ninety feet, over which the floods had extended until the water stood three or four feet deep, suddenly caved in, the result being the instantaneous flooding of a mine in which 300 men and boys were at work. Inside of half an hour the water had extended to all parts of the workings and at dark stood within five feet of the top of the main shaft. Seventy-four human beings were suffocated in the grim recess of the mine. All hope of the possible rescue of any of these unhappy beings was abandoned at dusk, when the water poured into the main shaft. The mine, which covered some eighty acres underground, was largely composed of quicksand, through which the water easily sank on three or four different occasions. The miners having become used to these breaks did not think there was much danger when the water commenced breaking through, at 11 o'clock, most of them refusing to leave the mine, thinking there was no danger of the mine flooding; but in a few moments the break widened to a chasm twenty feet wide by sixty feet long. Two miners, Satchzell and Unger, were among the first to escape from the air shaft, but both at once descended again, thinking they might aid some of their fellows, but they never came up again. Redmond, who was also lost, has several sons in the mine. He escaped with his son John, but in endeavoring to save his son Matt he made another trip below and lost his life. The main shaft of the mine is over eighty-five feet deep. William Dent the engineer discovered the water at the foot of the shaft at 11:15 a. m. but before he could sound an alarm the surface collapse became so great that all hope was given up that any lives could be saved. Willie Dennison was one of the last to escape from the mine. He only succeeded after diving through three openings and finally reaching the air shaft. It is said by old miners that even if the water did not reach the imprisoned men at once and end their sufferings, the foul air would put out the lamps in an hour, and no human being could live when the air was foul enough to extinguish the lights. Besides the men there were about a dozen mules in the mine. Little by little the terrible character of the catastrophe became apparent. Then it was that the most heartrending scenes occurred. A wife bent over the shaft as her husband was climbing the ladder with his young son dead in his arms and extended her arms to receive them; But she was doomed to disappointment, for the man, worn out with the desperate struggle which he had undergone to save the body of his son, fell back into the pit a lifeless corpse and has not since been seen. Mrs. McQuiston, who was on the ground when the news came that her husband and three sons were dead in the mine, was taken with nervous prostration and had to be removed from the ground. She is now in a precarious condition and her mind is permanently injured.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/861656190/>

The following is the story of John Huber, an eye witness of the whole affair, and a man who was in the mine at the time of the accident:

I was working in one of the west sections of the main corridor and had just got my car ready for transfer when I heard a voice which sounded weak at first, saying: "Look out! the water is coming." For a few moments I did not comprehend the awful meaning of the language used, and so went back to block up the coal, when I heard the same warning again and saw a small stream of water running down the center of the track. The truth at once flashed upon me that I was in danger and that the water was coming from some unknown locality, I rushed as fast as the nature of the passage would allow to where I thought my two sons were at work but found that they had gone. I then yelled at the top of my voice to the men near me, and made as fast as I could for the air shaft. By this time the water was up to my armpits, and I had a hard time to get up the shaft, so exhausted was I with the rapid run I had made in the stooping position. When I got home, great God! what did I see! There upon her bed lay my wife, tearing her hair and wailing in almost a crazed condition. "Oh, John," she said, "where are the boys?" The truth then flashed upon me that perhaps they were dead. I went back as fast as I could, and found my horrible anticipations were only too true, and that the boys had not been seen since entering the shaft in the morning.

The escape of the majority was almost by a miracle. Two got out by the main shaft, the rest by the air shaft, leaving seventy-one below to be suffocated by foul air or to drown in the flood of waters.

An official states that it might take thirty days to get to the imprisoned men if they do all that can be done. There are nine mines stopped on account of the accident, and he expects there will be a loss in output of 14,000 tons at least.

Another special says: The number of victims of yesterday's great disaster is now placed at seventy-five. At sunrise to-day hundreds of miners poured into the neighborhood of the Diamond mine. The fierce wind which swept the prairies made work in the open air difficult. The gurgling water had risen during the night to the mouth of the main shaft, where it was on a level with the prairie. The pumps had not been put in operation because it would have been as easy to pump out a lake as to pump out the coal pits, fed by water extending over acres of surface.

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