

## EIGHT MINERS SMOTHERED

### MEETING DEATH IN A COAL SHAFT.

**Brave Men Working to Quench the Fire in the Buck Ridge Colliery Are Overcome by Gas and Choked to Death—Wailing of the Wives and Children.**

Special Dispatch to THE TIMES.

SHAMOKIN, August 21.

The fire which so suddenly broke out at 4 o'clock yesterday morning at the Buck Ridge slope is burning with increased fierceness and will not only destroy its own workings, but probably those of Greenback Colliery, adjoining, just purchased by the Reading Coal and Iron Company. General Manager Whiting, Mine Inspectors Luther and Williams and District Superintendent William Booth, experts, reached the scene of the fire yesterday and after an hour's consultation decided that the only means of checking the progress of the fire, if it could be done at all, was to drive a hole from the Greenback gangway into the Buck Ridge air-course, a distance of forty feet, through which water would be forced upon the fire.

The work of driving the hole was immediately begun with a force of seven of the most experienced miners, under the direction of Superintendent Booth. The miners moved cautiously, fully aware of their dangerous undertaking, and made rapid headway with the hole, which was to be finished this evening. District Superintendents Williams and Booth, having immediate superintendence over the men, constantly remained with them until about 5 o'clock this morning, when they came out to look at the fire.

#### IN THE DEADLY FIRE-DAMP.

While they were absent Peter Welker went down the Greenback slope to feed the mules. In descending he felt the wagon in which he was riding jar. He quickly jumped out of the wagon and discovered the body of a man lying on the track, grasping the rail. Welker immediately signalled the engineer to stop, but before he could see who the man on the track was the fire-damp extinguished his lamp. Almost overcome and exhausted, he managed to get into the car and grasped the bell and signalled to be hoisted. A few minutes later the wagon reached the surface, with Welker lying in it insensible. This was the first intimation the officials had of anything wrong inside.

Frank Wardrop and Valentine Depner volunteered to go down and reach the miners inside, but the attempt almost cost them their lives. They were hoisted out more dead than alive. Both the Greenback and Buck Ridge Mine soon filled up with foul air and everyone working about the place were forced to the surface, but the men who were driving the hole and fifteen mules were still inside and all must perish.

#### EIGHT MEN SMOTHERED.

The mining engineers examined the slope as far as they could with safety, and gave it as their opinion that the gas forced its way from the old workings down upon the miners, smothering the eight men engaged in driving the hole. Their names are William Carl, Patrick Haley, William B. Clark, William Shankweiler, William Taylor, George Beck, Robert White and William Fox.

The news of the accident soon reached Shamokin and the neighboring patches, creating intense excitement. Men, women and children rushed to the scene, and in less than an hour over one thousand people pressed closely up to the mouth of the ill-fated mine. The coal and iron mining engineers and experts examined closely the condition of the mine and knew it would be certain death to any one to attempt to go down the Greenback slope. It was then decided to open the bottom vein slope at the Buck Ridge Mine, which would change the current of air at the Greenback and force it back to Buck Ridge by means of a fan to be erected.

#### EFFORTS TO RECOVER THE BODIES.

If nothing happens to delay the work the bodies may be reached before morning. Every movement made by the workmen and officials is watched by the crowds around the mine, especially by the families of the dead miners, who lived within three hundred yards of the colliery. The wives of the victims sit together in tears near the slope, anxiously watching for the arrival of their husbands, while the little children, bitterly crying, cling to them. Carl is 36 years of age and leaves a wife and two children; Haley is 40 years old and leaves a wife and five children; Clark is 39 years old and leaves a wife and four children; Shankweiler is 42 years old and leaves a wife and six children; Taylor is 39 years old and leaves a wife and one child; Beck is 37 years old and leaves a wife and three children; Fox is 43 years old and leaves a wife and four children. Robert White was the son of Inside Superintendent White and was only 16 years of age.

The excitement is intense and the suspense pending the finding of the bodies is almost more than the wives and children of the victims can bear. Nothing will be left undone and no expense spared to recover the bodies to-night. The loss to the Coal and Iron Company will probably reach one hundred thousand dollars, beside the long term of idleness the employees will be forced into.